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THE HIGH FAITH OF
FICTION AND DRAMA

BOOKS BY WILLIAM L. STIDGER

THE HIGH FAITH OF FICTION AND DRAMA
PULPIT PRAYERS AND PARAGRAPHS
BUILDING UP THE MID-WEEK SERVICE
BUILDING SERMONS WITH SYMPHONIC THEMES
FINDING GOD IN BOOKS
THAT GOD'S HOUSE MAY BE FILLED
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THE HIGH FAITH OF FICTION AND DRAMA

By

WILLIAM L. STIDGER, D.D., LITT.D.



GARDEN CITY

NEW YORK

DOUBLEDAY, DORAN & COMPANY, INC.

1928

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PRINTED IN THE UNITED STATES AT THE
COUNTRY LIFE PRESS, GARDEN CITY, N. Y.

FIRST EDITION

DEDICATED TO
FRED STONE
MINISTER OF MIRTH
PROPHET OF PLEASANTRY
OF WHOM IT MIGHT BE SAID:

*"You see that boy laughing,
You think he's all fun;
But the angels laugh too
At the good he has done.
The children laugh loud
As they troop to his call,
And the poor man who knows
him
Laughs loudest of all."*

—OLIVER WENDELL HOLMES

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

Dr. Stidger expresses his gratitude to the following authors and publishers for permission to use the books and plays in these sermons :

- "The Enemy" by Channing Pollock. Publisher, Brentano's.
- "Saint Joan" by Bernard Shaw. Publishers, Brentano's.
- "Ben Hur" by Gen. Lew Wallace. Publishers, Harper & Bros.
- "The Big Parade" (Motion Picture). Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.
- "The Devil's Disciple" by Bernard Shaw.
- "Hell Bent Fer Heaven" by Thatcher Hughes.
- "The Passing of the Third Floor Back" by Jerome K. Jerome. Publishers, Dodd, Mead & Company.
- "The Servant in the House" by Charles Rann Kennedy. Publishers, Harper & Bros.
- "The Miracle" by Max Reinhardt. Publishers, Brentano's.
- "The Fool in Christ" by Gerhart Hauptmann. Publishers, The Viking Press.
- "One Increasing Purpose" by A. D. M. Hutchinson. Publishers, Little, Brown & Co.
- "The Power of a Lie," by Johan Bojer. Publishers, The Century Co.
- "Princess Salome" by Burriss A. Jenkins. Publishers, Lippincott's.
- "The Way of All Flesh" (Motion Picture). Famous Players-Lasky Co.
- "Seventh Heaven" (Motion Picture). Fox Films Corporation.

A WORD FROM THE PUBLISHER

The Chicago University Press recently published a book entitled "Religious Thought in the Last Quarter Century."

In that book a chapter is devoted to each phase of religious thought and an attempt is made by experts to sum up the greatest contributions that have been made to various phases of church life, homiletics, and religious thought. Each chapter is written from a scientific viewpoint.

In the chapter on "American Preaching" which is written by Dr. Ozora S. Davis, several outstanding American preachers are mentioned, including Dr. S. Parkes Cadman, Dr. Charles Reynolds Brown, Dr. Charles Edward Jefferson, Dr. Harry Emerson Fosdick, and Dr. William L. Stidger, the author of this book.

Dr. Davis says:

"It is safe to say that the most influential preachers today are those who have broken from the dogmatic fetters and are taking the 'direct look' at life. The actual experience of living men and women in their experiment with the principles of Jesus as a way of living furnishes the most and the best of the material that is found in the sermons of today."

But more important to us as publishers is a statement which Dr. Davis makes of the outstanding contribution which Dr. William L. Stidger has made to American Preaching in the last quarter of a century, particularly in the light of the fact that all of Dr. Stidger's books on the Dramatic Book Sermon have been published from this press :

"Still more characteristic of this period of development is the appearance and popularity of the sermon on a book or a piece of literature. This has resulted not only in the definition of a particular sermon type but has also called into being a large amount of literature on the religious values and use of the literature of power. *The preacher best known for his use of the 'book sermon' is Rev. William L. Stidger.* (Italics are ours.) The best example of his method may be seen in 'There are Sermons in Books,' and 'Finding God in Books,' 1925. He names these discourses 'Dramatic Book Sermons' and 'Drama Sermons.' By means of these, the preacher affirms, 'he makes his own preaching ministry live and glow with real human beings who walk up and down his pulpit platform, in dialogue and dramatic scene, teaching their lessons and giving their spiritual impetus.' "

In the light of this recognition, coming from the University of Chicago, we take added pleasure in publishing this new book of Dr. Stidger's drama sermons, and once again calling attention to his other books dealing with books, which we have have published :

"There are Sermons in Books"

"Finding God in Books"

"That God's House May Be Filled"

"The Place of Books in the Life we Live"

Dr. Stidger has made another contribution to the science of preaching which is being widely used among preachers of all denominations, and which Homiletic Departments and outstanding ministers are using and recognizing as a distinctly new way of pulpit approach, The Symphonic Sermon. We have published two volumes of these Symphonic Sermons. Dr. Stidger himself feels that this new method of preaching is even a more distinct contribution to preaching than the Dramatic Book Sermon idea, which the Chicago University Press rates so highly. His books on the Symphonic Theme idea are:

"Symphonic Sermons"

"Building Sermons with Symphonic Themes"

Since this manuscript was accepted by our editors Dr. Stidger has received a further recognition of his services to the preachers of America, and of his ability as a preacher, in a call to the Department of Homiletics and Pastoral Science in the Boston University School of Theology. He will also be the Sunday morning preacher at Copley Plaza Methodist Episcopal Church, the pulpit made famous by Dr. Edward Everette Hale, one of Boston's historic preaching shrines.

We are glad to publish this book of sermons marking the event of this new teaching and preaching min-

istry of Dr. Stidger in Boston. He now becomes a preacher of preachers in the logic of events, a goal towards which he has been moving in his books of sermons and methods for many years.

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THE HIGH FAITH OF
FICTION AND DRAMA

CHAPTER I

"THE ENEMY"

BY CHANNING POLLOCK

A MESSAGE OF PEACE

There is a dramatic device employed in "The Enemy" which haunts the soul for ever.

Years ago there was a play called "The Drums of Oude," a Hindu story of men besieged in the Black Hole at Calcutta. All during the play one could hear, off in the distance, the beating of "The Drums of Oude." The sound of those impending savage drums never ceased.

Two years ago in New York City ran a play called "The World We Live In" by Carl Capek. It too has the story of militarism and labour dramatized on the stage. A taskmaster sat in the centre of the stage and counted time: "One, two, three, four! One, two, three, four!" The feet of the labourers were supposed to keep time to that beat. Now and then he speeded up his count, and when one man dropped out, another took his place. I can still hear the terrible beat of that "One, two, three, four! One, two, three, four!"

In "Rain" there was that incessant downpour of rain on the roof of the tropical hotel, while Sadie Thompson worked her havoc. There was the inhuman,

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monotonous beat of the sun on the roof and the rain on the roof, and the sun on the souls of human beings and the rain on the heads of human beings. That beating downpour, continuous, terrible, monotonous, seemed to cave in the souls of every actor in that tragedy.

In "The Green Goddess" there was the incessant call of the tree-toad, and in "Tristan and Isolde" there was always the plaintive notes of the shepherd's pipe.

But in "The Enemy" all during the second act, there is the sound of military marching music. "We must march! We must march!" might have been its theme, and the incessant, terrible tramping was always heard out of the windows.

And when one's son or one's husband or one's father is going off to war there is no more terrible sound than the incessant tramping of marching feet. Those marching feet may tramp a mother's heart into the cobblestones and crush it for ever.

I cannot forget the sight that my friend Judge Evans saw in Germany just before we entered the war. German soldiers by thousands were being poured into the deep graves of Verdun. They were pouring human flesh into that city's bombardment with as much abandonment as they were pouring shells into Doumont. My friend Judge Evans saw thousands of German mothers sending their boys off that day. He watched them. They did not weep as their boys crowded on board the train that would take them to certain death. Judge Evans was storming in his soul with indignation. "Ruthless women! No wonder the German nation is a military nation! Savages! If German mothers can

send their boys away without a tear, no wonder the nation has become a military training-camp. They are savages!"

The boys laughed and smiled from the windows of the train and the mothers and wives and sweethearts smiled back. He did not see a tear in that crowd. Rather, a sense of hilarity seemed to prevail. It was a terrible thing to see. What had happened to humanity? Had the milk of human kindness dried up in their breasts? Had they become what they were called, "Barbarians"?

The train pulled out. Not a tear. Waving of hands, laughter, smiles, as if those boys were going off to a picnic instead of to certain death.

The train disappeared around a curve. Then a sudden, strange silence, like the silence of a calm before a storm; like the silence of that vacuum in the heart of a typhoon. Silence—and then one great, terrible mother-moan went up from that crowd of women on that station platform.

"It was the most heart-breaking sound I ever heard. It seemed to come as one outcry from those thousands of women. Hundreds sank to the stone pavements of the railroad station. Women fainted. They had waited until their boys had gone—until the train had gone around the curve—and then that terrible moan of Motherhood—I can hear it in my dreams still. I hear it in the winds of the night. I hear it on the streets. I hear it on trains. I hear it in the silence of churches as I pray. I hear it everywhere. That moan of a thousand women haunts my soul night and day."

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Act One

BEFORE THE STORM BREAKS ON THE WORLD

The stage opens on two rooms, a living room and a dining room in a flat in Vienna. Both rooms are warm and cosy. The walls are red denim, with dark wood and bookcases around them.

Several canvases hang on the walls, notably a large Judas on the back wall.

To the right a window looks out into a courtyard. Further upstage to the right is a heavy door through which a mail-slot shows.

In the centre of the sitting-room are large doors, which when opened, show into the dining room.

There is a high chandelier in the dining-room, and under this chandelier is a reading-desk. A wire has been dropped from the chandelier to give electricity to a reading lamp on the desk.

There are two reading lamps in the room. The other one is to the right. It is on an old-fashioned roll-top desk, which is piled high with papers. Above this desk is a photograph of Bruce Gordon, and over it is draped an English flag.

There is a small sideboard and an oblong dining-table in the dining room.

On top of the bookcases to the left is a marble statue of the Winged Victory, a tobacco jar, and some pipes.

The curtain rises at noon on Sunday, June 28, 1914. Sunshine floods the two rooms. All is cheerfulness. Several friends have gathered. One of these friends is

Bruce Gordon, an English boy who is studying in Vienna. Pauli is twenty-four, beautiful, fragile. She is in love with Carl. Carl has just written a play called "The Enemy." In this play he takes the stand that the real enemy of mankind is Hate; that in war every nation is talking of the barbarism of other nations; Every nation is feeding its citizenship lies about the inhumanities and cruelties being perpetrated by other nations. England is starving Germany, the United States have Indians who still scalp people, and a cruelty which burns men at the stake.

Carl is reading his new play to Pauli, his sweetheart, when just at the climax, the sound of drums comes from across the courtyard. The drums are being played by a boy, but it interrupts the reading, and Pauli exclaims in sympathy:

Pauli: "Too bad, just as you reach the fine moment!"

Carl (gathering up his manuscript): "That's life! Just as you reach the fine moment—" (Struck by sudden doubt, he halts action and sentence.) "Pauli, you *do* think it's a fine moment?"

Pauli: "Yes!"

Carl: "It came to me the other day because Kurt—across the hall—he is always asking for a drum. All of my characters are just us—in different circumstances—nice little people, caught up in a whirlwind of hate—puzzled—never knowing whence, or why, or whither—until they are dashed to pieces—You get that?"

Pauli: (repeating) "Yes! Nice little people. Why do you call them 'The enemy?'"

Carl: "I don't! The enemy is Hate—the real enemy!" Then Bruce Gordon steps in. He also loves Pauli, but the two men are comrades. Bruce and Carl continue the conversation:

Carl: "Fancy hating a country of Bruce Gordon's! Hate is a manufactured product—fatal to ourselves as well as to those we hate. I wish I had a typewriter!"

Bruce sees his chance to express his friendship for Carl, who is too poor to buy a typewriter on which to copy his own play. He goes out, buys one, and slips it in as a surprise.

There is a happy Sunday dinner of roast goose, with much laughter, a group of friends who love each other, an international group, with Bruce Gordon, the Englishman, in the centre of the fun.

There is much conversation at this happy dinner in June of 1914 in the Sabbath calm, talk of Peace and International Friendship that are worth noting:

"Goethe did more to make Germany respected and understood than all of her warriors."

Again: "When people understand one another, they will not need soldiers. England's greatest conqueror was not Nelson, but Shakespeare."

Kurt, the boy, comes in and asks for a present. He wants a drum. It is his birthday. He is asked what he wants by Bruce, the Englishman, who loves the little fellow.

Kurt: "A sword and a drum."

Bruce: "Drummer boys don't carry swords. What will you do with the sword?"

Kurt: "Kill the enemy."

Carl: "The enemy? Who are they?"

Kurt: "Everybody but us. And we can lick everybody."

Somehow we realize at this silent moment, in spite of the humour of the dialogue, that this is exactly what war teaches us—that everybody but us is the enemy. We are also taught that we can lick the whole world. We here in America believed that following the Spanish-American War. But the soldiers who were in France no longer believe that the United States can whip the world. Many who stayed at home talk that way, but none who saw actual service in France. We *know* that we cannot whip the world.

Into the midst of this quiet, peaceful Sabbath day in June of 1914, come hate and horror, like a black cloud spreading over a summer sky.

Carl is trying out his new typewriter. The room is full of people. He writes the first sentence on the machine. Pauli bends over him to see what it is. Carl types in large letters: "I—LOVE—YOU!"

They are waiting for Fritz, who is a reporter, to sit down to the Sunday dinner. Fritz, jovial, friendly, big, expansive, witty, is all that is needed to make that party of friends complete.

Carl goes to the phone. Carl seems agitated at the phone:

Carl: "Hello—yes, Fritz—we're waiting—what? when? It doesn't seem possible—How soon will you be here?—All right—Good-bye."

During this agitated talk on the phone Pauli has torn

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the paper from the typewriter on which is written "I LOVE YOU!" and has tucked it into her bosom. Then, alarmed at Carl's tone, she turns to him.

Pauli: "What is it, Carl?"

Carl: "Fritz isn't coming. The Archduke has been killed in Sarajevo. (Then, seeing the worry in her eyes) Pauli! What's that to us?"

And with nothing to disturb them, they melt into each other's arms.

The curtain falls.

"What's that to us?"

God in Heaven, little did they know what the murder of the worthless Archduke meant to them, and meant to all the world. That murder was to upset the balance of the earth. It was to change the course of the stream of time. It was to affect hundreds of millions of people. It was to upset, like an earthquake, the Orient and the Occident. It was to bring Chinese coolies and African negroes to fight on French soil. It was to take a million American soldiers from their isolation to fight on French soil. It was to destroy kingdoms and topple thrones.

"What's that to us?"

So all of us sat in our happy places; I in San Francisco, you in Greece; I studying and preaching in a quiet little church on the edge of the sand dunes which sloped down to the Pacific waters that lapped within the Golden Gate; you teaching Christianity to the outcasts of India. A year later we meet on French soil one night under a bombardment of German shells in a dugout.

"What's that to us?"

It meant that we would soon be caught up in a whirlwind of hate, when we would hate Germans and Russians and Austrians as if they were animals and savages. And it meant that they would hate us as if we were savages. It meant that we would be fed on lies about Germans cutting off the hands of Belgian children; lies which the English Intelligence Department has already admitted were lies. It meant that Germans were told that we Americans would burn them at the stake like we lynch negroes, if we conquered them. It meant that Germans were told that we still have Indians who massacre and scalp Germans. It meant that every nation was fed on lies about every other nation.

"What's that to us?"

It was everything to us and to all. It meant so much to us that it has changed our entire world destiny as a nation and it has changed every home and every life on American soil.

Act Two

THE STORM BREAKS AND THE MARCHING ARMIES OF HATE TRAMP THE WORLD'S HIGHWAYS

When the curtain rises on the second act the setting is the same, only there is a slight difference. Pauli and Carl are married and are living here. Oil lamps have taken the place of the electric lamps. The Winged Victory is on the centre table because many of the books and bookcases have been sold. The pictures on the walls have been sold. The desk is still there and the typewriter covered, bearing evidence of not having been used for a long time.

The curtain rises on Tuesday, August 4, 1914, late afternoon.

Before even the curtain rises we hear the sound of a distant military band and the tramp, tramp, tramp of marching feet. This latter sound never stops during the act, except when the doors that open out on the court in the upper room are closed. Then it is far away but insistent, unending—a rumble of Fate. There is also the sound of cheers.

Mizzi is leaning out of the window watching the soldiers marching.

Mizzi: "Isn't it glorious? Isn't it beautiful? Why doesn't Kurt come? Not a break in the line since early afternoon. How can you sit there calmly when the whole country's ablaze? What's that, a Pacifist book?" (Scornfully.)

Professor: "The worst of all Pacifist books—the Bible."

Mizzi: "You're copying from the Bible? What?"

Professor: "The worst of all Pacifist lines, 'Thou shalt not kill!'"

Here we get a contrast of the extremely emotional type swept away by the blare of military bands, the tramp of marching feet, the waving of flags, the feeding of hatred. Mizzi, who ordinarily loves the Professor, begins to hate him because he is a Pacifist. We all saw that happen here in America and all over the earth.

Pauli comes in. She is thinking of war and that it will take Carl. Mizzi is still enthusiastic about the

music and the marching armies which haven't broken line since morning. Pauli speaks.

Pauli: "Mizzi! It's terrible!"

Mizzi: "The music?"

Pauli (coming to window): "The tramping feet!"

One by one the members of the family enter the scene, that family of friends which was so happy in June. The tramp of marching armies bombards their ears and their souls. It drives everybody frantic. Like the dropping of water on stone, it wears down their reserves. Like the rain in the great play, like the drums of Oude, like the count in "The World We Live In"—this incessant sound of tramping soldiers breaks down the calm and poise. Worry, fear, dread, death, hovers about that group.

There is an argument about who is to blame. They begin to quarrel. They begin to hate each other, these friends of two months ago.

There is a snatch of conversation between Pauli and Carl. Carl has changed his view. He doesn't want his play, "The Enemy," published.

Carl: "I've changed my views."

Pauli: "Like everyone else—because a band is playing. You mustn't! More than ever, you must remind people that the enemy is Hate—the real Enemy! Do you know that Mizzi has begun to hate Bruce, and I have begun to hate Mizzi!"

Carl: "What nonsense! How utterly idiotic!"

The act moves on swiftly with that incessant beating of drums and sound of music in the distance, and the tramp, tramp, tramp of marching feet.

There are stories of British atrocities in the Vienna papers. Even Carl finds himself affected. All are present but Bruce. He has been in school quietly studying and does not know all that is going on.

Fritz comes in with news.

Fritz: "Already one Englishman has been beaten in the Franz-Joseph Strausse. There'll be others! The country is full of their spies! We'll clean 'em out—eh, Carl?"

Carl: "Every damned one of them!"

Pauli: "Not Bruce?"

Carl: "But for Bruce and his countrymen we wouldn't be—"

Bruce stands in the doorway. He is very white. He steps into the room, closes the door behind him, and faces Fritz. A sudden dead silence falls.

There is a sudden quarrel, such as sweeps like a storm on an inland lake. These friends, battered down by that incessant tramping, their nerves frayed, are at each other's throats. There are accusations of England's passion for World Dominion; and counter accusations that Germany has been preparing for that war for fifty years. Bruce cries out: "When you entered Belgium, you became the Enemy of the World!"

Somebody calls attention to the fact that England's flag flies over Bruce's picture. Carl pulls up a chair to drag the flag down.

Carl: "The dirty rag!"

Bruce: "Don't touch that flag!"

Carl: "What'll you do?"

Bruce: (murderously): "Never mind! Don't touch it!"

Fritz: "I spit on it!" (He leaps for it; Bruce smashes him; and he falls back across the table, his hand touching the carving knife left lying there. He seizes it and jumps at Bruce crying: "You SPY!")

Pauli: "Fritz!"

Carl: (suddenly turning white and sick, clinging to the table): "Bruce, your arm! Look! Oh, my God!"

Bruce quietly but defiantly goes to his picture, lifts the British flag from the frame, reverently, and puts it in his pocket. Then he picks up a napkin from the table to wrap his cut. We hear marching feet in the terrible silence that falls over the group after this outburst of hate among human beings who a month ago were devoted friends.

The second act closes with Pauli and Carl sitting up all night, waiting and yet dreading for morning to come. There is terrible suspense, and always that sound of tramping feet outside.

Pauli looks out of the window and speaks:

Pauli: "What time is it?"

Carl: "Ten after."

Pauli: "It can't be! . . . Is your watch right? . . . I'm cold . . . There's another light now. Lights everywhere. Women everywhere. Other women's men . . . going. . . . Your hands are cold."

Carl: "I'm afraid. I can't kill people! I can't hate anybody! I've tried! Bruce! All blood! I shall see thousands like that . . . with bloody arms, and . . . heads. Horses ripped open! Men stabbed and torn

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and blown to bits! Kill or be killed! I can't! I won't! I'll run away!"

Mizzi is there. Fritz has gone too. Both women have stayed up all night. Mizzi and Pauli kneel. The curtain drops.

Act Three

THE STORM IS ON IN ALL ITS FURY OF HATE

The setting is the same, only more meagre. Nothing of possible value remains. The rooms are denuded.

The weather is bitterly cold. There is frost on the windows. Everybody huddles about the fire.

The time is a grey day of the first week in March, 1917.

Mr. Pollock describes the difference in the people in a phrase from "Reading Goal": "Something was dead in each of us, and what was dead was Hope."

Pauli's baby is seriously ill. The doctor has just been in. The baby must have milk and eggs, but there are no milk and eggs.

The doctor has left three cigarette stubs. The professor seizes these to smoke in his pipe. There is no tobacco.

They have built a fire in celebration of Carl's home-coming on furlough.

The professor has come home from the Bread Line. It has been squares long. Every time they chalked up a new figure on the price of bread because of the falling in value of a crown, people dropped out of line. The professor, who had refrained from hatred all this time, came home without food. The baby was crying,

Pauli's baby. There was no milk and no eggs. He lifted his hands into the air and began to curse the English because of the blockade. Then he caught himself and cried out to Pauli like a frightened child:

"Don't let *me* hate! Don't let *me* become a barbarian!"

Weakly, he sinks down at the table. Pauli and Mizzi draw up chairs. There is a pause.

"For what we are about to receive, may the Lord make us truly grateful! Amen."

After dinner in comes Behrend, the Profiteer in the play. He is continually in conflict with the Professor. He is continually being contrasted with him.

The two quarrel about his profiteering. A heartfelt cry of the Professor as he sees the unutterable selfishness of Behrend, who is making money out of the suffering and death of humanity, who is smoking his big cigars, patronizing everybody—who is making money on the dropping of crowns—and suddenly the Professor cries out in the face of this traitor:

Professor: "Oh, God, keep me from hate!"

Behrend sneers at him. He has just given the Professor twenty-three gold pieces to buy milk for the sick baby. The Professor cries out.

Professor: "Blood money you are making!"

Behrend: "You take it!"

Professor: "What?"

Behrend (pointing): "Twenty-three gold pieces!"

Professor: (with a single sweep brushing them from the table): "Take them!"

Behrend: "You're mad!"

Professor: "From the floor! On your knees! On your belly! Crawl! You can't stoop as low to get them back as you stooped to get them!"

Pauli is waiting for Carl to come home. It is his first furlough since the war started. He and Jan will come home together.

Jan comes, but no Carl. Pauli rushes in and thinks Carl is up to some trick, and calls for him to come forth from his hiding-place. She is hysterical with fear. Jan is wild-eyed.

Professor: "Where's Carl?" (Seizing Jan by both arms.)

Jan: "Don't ask me! I don't know! He's dead!"

Jan and Pauli stare at each other. Pauli asks Mizzi to go in to the sick baby.

Jan begins a terrible description of the trenches, death, blood, wounds, and Carl's death. He is half delirious. The Professor tries to stop him.

Professor: "Stop it! For God's sake, stop—STOP!"

A long pause. Off stage, beneath the bedroom window, a band is approaching. One hears the drums and the tramp of marching feet in the distance.

Professor (trying to comfort Pauli): "You've got your baby."

There is a scream from Mizzi who has gone to Pauli's sick baby. Pauli turns white, hesitates, and then runs into the bedroom. A cry:

Pauli: "My baby's dead!"

Professor: "No! No! No!"

Pauli: "The drums didn't wake him! He's cold. Don't go in. I know. Listen! More troops! More! Always more! Where do they come from? From the ends of the earth! From the beginning of history—to the end of time! Marching, marching! Babies still unborn . . . their mothers still unborn . . . marching!"

Mizzi: "Stop her!"

Above the distant music and tramping, a near trumpet sounds 'Assembly.'

Pauli: (suddenly, triumphantly, but very quietly): "Not MY baby! HE won't answer your trumpets! He'll never feel mud, and agony, and the bullets tearing up his face! I've nothing more to feed your guns! (The band is passing.) My baby's safe! (The curtain begins to fall.) My baby's dead! Thank God! Thank God! THANK GOD!"

Act Four

THE AFTERMATH OF THE STORM OF HATE

Cheerfulness has returned to the room. The pictures are still gone, there is a bareness about the room, but there is a new typewriter stand. Upon it is the typewriter stripped for action. Pauli has moved back to her little room and the dining-room is as it was in the first act.

The curtain rises late afternoon of a glorious June day. June 29, 1919. It is after five, but the rooms are still flooded with sunlight. Pauli's hair is quite white.

Bruce Gordon is there. His bag is on the floor. They have just seen Carl's play "The Enemy." Bruce likes

it. Pauli is talking to a picture of Carl's before which are some flowers.

Pauli: "Do you hear that, Carl? Your friend has seen your play, and *loves* it!"

Bruce has sold the play in London. It is to be produced there. The money relieves the family poverty. The Professor is childishly happy over his food and tobacco and peace.

Fritz comes in. He is an old, wan, haggard man now, instead of the boyish, happy-go-lucky, laughing boy who went away to war. He is shot to pieces in his nerves. He can't keep his job on the paper. They tell him they want sound men; that they can no longer carry nervous wrecks, even if they were soldiers. That was the usual experience of the men who went to war.

I know a young choir director who went to war, and while he was gone the Music Committee put an old man in his place, and when the young man came back they would not give him back his job. If I had known as much as I know now, either they would have given that boy back his job, or they would have had a new preacher.

The editor said to Fritz: "Winckelman, you fellows are no good!"

In the midst of the boy's protests against the injustice of his being fired from his newspaper job, in comes Behrend, the Profiteer, boasting about a decoration he has just received for services in the war. In the presence of all his workmen, he has been decorated. This

turns Fritz into a madman. He leaps to his feet, reaches into his pocket, and like a madman shouts:

Fritz: "I'm fired and you're decorated! Not much!"

His right hand is suddenly jerked from his pocket and pointed at Behrend.

Behrend: "He's got a pistol!"

Bruce: "Steady, Fritz!"

Mizzi: "No, Fritz!"

Fritz: (to all of them squaring himself): "Keep off, all of you!"

Behrend: "You'd murder me!"

Fritz: "Why not? You taught me the trade!"

Behrend: "Grab him!" (Bruce seizes his arm, and pulls out his hand, clutching a crust of bread.)

Fritz: (beginning to laugh) "Nothing but a crust! I've given you one moment of what we faced for years, and you've given me the laugh of my life! (Laughs like a madman.)

The play ends with a brief running dialogue. It is talk of war. Behrend, the Profiteer, and the Pacifist Professor are at it again, in peace as in war.

Professor: "What *did* we fight for?"

Behrend: "For ideals! For culture!"

Professor: "For culture! Ten million lives! Two hundred billion dollars! For that sum the world could have been cured and taught! What might not have been done for art, science, humanity? Instead, we have achieved ruin, riot, revolution, famine, anarchy, and hatred. In a single century England alone has fought eighty wars! No one remembers what they

were about, and no one can say what they have accomplished!" . . .

Professor: "Shall I tell you? England would not see her supremacy threatened. That's Arrogance! Every nation except America . . . wanted trade and territory. That's Greed! Many of us had taken it. Robbery! We were tied up in secret engagements. Intrigue! We supported enormous armies. Selfish ambition! Other races prospered. Envy! And we were the greatest. Vanity! And above all, ignorance . . . hatred . . . and the lust to kill. It's the Law of the Jungle!"

Behrend: "There will always be War!"

As he speaks, a boy's voice off stage cries:

"Fall in! Attention! Right dress!"

Pauli (who walks to the window to look out at the boy): "Sometimes the whole thing seems ages ago, and then . . . a conversation like the one we just heard. Mr. Behrend's 'there will always be war!' Will there?"

Bruce: "If we think so!"

Pauli: "World-wide chaos, and there across the courtyard, the next generation drilling . . . marching . . . marching! Will nothing stop it? Shall we never learn? Must we go on to the end of time, with bands and banners flying, marching, marching, over our heaped-up dead, into new futility, new agony, horror, and destruction? God! . . ."

Off stage, we hear a boy's voice: "Forward march!" and again we hear that eternal tread.

Bruce: "The tramping feet!"

Pauli: "Close that window! I want to shut it out!"

A child's bugle blows 'assembly.' Bruce closes the window.

Professor (in terror of the bugle's effect) : "Pauli!"

Pauli (rushing into his arms) : "Father!"

Professor : "Carl's Pauli cries defiance to the new day."

Pauli : "Will there be any new day?"

The Professor nods and draws her head to him, soothing her, petting her, reassuring her as she, soothed, petted and reassured Carl.

Professor : "Time isn't measured by our little lives. We are still children. Some day we shall grow up. Some day there will be an end of race and creed and hate and prejudice." (From across the courtyard comes the roll of drums.)

Pauli : "Meanwhile. . . ."

Professor : "Over ourselves . . . over our blind instincts and stupid passions. . . ."

Bruce : "God give us Victory!"

Pauli (in a ringing voice) : "God give us peace!"

The drums swell, but Pauli, exalted, prophetic, only lifts her head higher looking past tomorrow into a new day. The curtain falls.

And what is the text for this tremendous play?

Isaiah 52:7; "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace."

In the name of the "Prince of Peace" we preachers preach this drama sermon of Channing Pollock's. No wonder the critics call it a sermon. It is a sermon. It

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is a tremendous sermon on Love; against Hate; for Peace; against War. That is our mission today; the same as that of all the Paulis of the earth; the women of the world; the mothers; the wives; to lift exalted heads to the new day of "Peace on earth, good will to men!"

CHAPTER II

"SAINT JOAN"

BY BERNARD SHAW

A MESSAGE OF VOICES AND VISIONS

"And I heard a voice."—Revelation 14:2.

The Book of Revelation is a Book of Voices. That might well be its title.

There are the voices of waterfalls, of thunders, of lightnings, of earthquakes, of singing angelic hosts—everywhere voices.

One of the most beautiful things about Bernard Shaw's "St. Joan" is the strikingly dramatic emphasis on her "Voices." There have been hundreds of novels, dramas, histories on Joan. Perhaps no character outside of Jesus Christ, Lincoln, and Napoleon, has been more written about than the girl Joan.

Therefore we approach a spiritual interpretation of this beautiful play in a Drama Sermon with a good deal of expectant reverence. We too, seem to hear "Voices" everywhere in the story of Joan. We stand with hushed hearts listening to these voices.

Scene One

THE CASTLE OF VOUCOULEURS ON THE MEUSE

Captain Robert de Baudricourt is in charge, a great gruff soldier of France. His servant has been telling

him that the hens are not laying; that the presence of the strange Maid of Domremy has put a spell on the castle; that the cows are not giving down their milk. It is a humorous touch for which Shaw is famous. But it is a very serious thing for the steward, for Sir Robert sends him out with the injunction that he will lose his head if he does not bring him eggs and milk.

There is talk in this act with Poulengey, a soldier, about this maid: and the captain warns him that he must not trifle with her. Poulengey answers his captain and friend:

"There is something about her. They are pretty foul-mouthed and foul-minded down there in the guard-room, some of them. But there hasn't been a word that has anything to do with her being a woman. They have stopped swearing before her. There is something. Something!"

Later in this same conversation this gruff soldier says to his captain:

"Her words, and her ardent faith in God, have put fire into me!"

Robert (giving him up): "Whew! You are as mad as she is!"

Poulengey (obstinately): "We want a few mad people now. See where the sane ones have landed us!"

Which is the first lesson I want to point out through this Drama Sermon.

"These are come hither who have turned the world upside down," was said of Jesus and His followers. They were considered madmen in their day. Mad men

through all time have saved the world from literalness and materialism! There are some so-called Mad Men, some of God's Fools even now going up and down the earth talking about, passionately prophesying, preaching about, writing about, believing in—men and women who will not rest, who cannot keep their silence—talking about a League of Nations, a World Court, a Universal Brotherhood of Humankind.

Come the sane ones, the poised ones, the contented ones, the selfish ones, with one slogan: “They are mad Idealists!”

What is the answer that these Idealists may make to those who point the finger of scorn at them, from their complacency? Answer: “We want a few mad people now. See where the sane ones have landed us!”

And where did the sane ones land us? Answer: In the worst catastrophe that the world has ever known; where untold millions have been slaughtered and blood has run like rivers across the fair fields of humanity!

Yes, please God, “we want a few mad people now. See where the sane ones have landed us!”

Poulengy referred to the fact that, at that moment, fair France was in the hands of the English; that Charles the Dauphin was a moron and a weakling; that the French people were virtual vassals to England.

That was where the sane ones had landed France.

Then Captain Robert and his soldier friend continue their talk about Joan, this strange maid, of whom they have heard through many rumours, who had her visions from God—who has come to the Castle to get the captain to send her to the Dauphin. And in

their conversation they talk about Joan's miracles, stories of which have preceded her to the Castle.

Robert: "Miracles are all right, Poulengey. The only difficulty about them is that they don't happen nowadays."

Poulengey: "I used to think so. I am not so sure now. At all events, this is not a time to leave any stone unturned. There is something about the girl."

Robert: "Oh, you think the girl can work miracles, do you?"

Poulengey: "I think the girl is a bit of a miracle herself!"

Robert, the Captain of the Castle, is so piqued with curiosity over all that has happened; the story his steward has brought him about the spell which has been cast over his hens; the confidence his soldier-friend has in the maid; over that continually reiterated phrase, "There is something about her," and the air in which it is spoken; that he rather petulantly orders that Joan be brought into his presence—she who has been waiting for several days and who will not go away in spite of the orders of Captain Robert that she be sent away.

She comes in with vibrant self-confidence and a hopeful heart. She comes into his cynical presence to tell him that her God, her Saints, her Voices, have told her that he is to give her a horse and a guard to take her to the Dauphin at Chinon, where she is to give Charles a message which says that she is to drive the English out of France and crown Charles king in Rheims Cathedral.

Robert: "Orders from your Lord? And who the devil may your Lord be? I take no orders except from the King!"

Joan: "Yes, Squire, that is all right. My Lord is the King of Heaven!"

Robert: "How do you know?"

Joan: "I hear voices telling me what to do. They come from God."

Robert: "They come from your imagination."

Joan: "Of course. That is how the messages of God come to us."

Won by her confidence; won by that phrase of his friend: "Yes, there is something about her"; the Captain consents to her having a horse and an escort to go to Chinon to deliver her message to the Dauphin. The end of this scene moves to a rapid and dramatic conclusion. Joan starts off stage with a shout of triumph and joy. The first step of her mission is achieved. Her voices have not deceived her. It has happened as she has been told. Just then the steward bursts in with a basket full of eggs. The hens have mysteriously started laying as soon as the Captain grants Joan's Heaven-born request. As the steward bursts in he cries:

Steward: "Sir—sir—"

Robert: "What now?"

Steward: "The hens are laying like mad, sir. Five dozen eggs!"

Robert (stiffening convulsively, crossing himself, and forming with his pale lips the words): "Christ in Heaven! (Aloud but breathless) She did come from God!"

*Scene Two*THE CASTLE IN CHINON—AT END OF THE THRONE
ROOM

The Chamberlain and the Archbishop of Rheims wait for the Dauphin. They are fuming because the Dauphin is keeping them waiting. It is apparent that neither of them respect the weakling.

A soldier rushes in with the news of Joan's coming, and with a story of how a fellow-soldier was drowned in a well because he swore in Joan's presence after she had told him that he would die if he swore again. This soldier is much impressed by this miracle which Joan has performed and he cries out:

"I know a soldier who knows her. He says she's an angel. If ever I utter an oath again, may my soul be blasted to eternal damnation!"

The others laugh at his earnest ardour and his covenant.

Charles enters. He is a weakling, playing with a striped stick of candy, sucking it like a child as he talks with the Archbishop and the Chamberlain. Under their contempt, he squirms. Finally there is an insinuation that his father's blood does not run in his veins and he flies into a fit of anger. The Archbishop rebukes him with a regnant phrase in which there is a sermonic lesson:

"And you, sir, if you cannot rule your kingdom, at least try to rule yourself!"

There is much talk of Joan and her miracles, of her expected appearance in their presence, most of it in

jest, and yet in the mood of that immortal phrase: "There is something strange about the girl," until finally Bluebeard suggests a way to test her miracle-working power.

Bluebeard: "We can easily find out whether she is an angel or not. Let us arrange when she comes that I shall be the Dauphin, and see whether she will find me out!"

It is arranged. The trap is set for the innocent girl. The hilarious court awaits the expose. The richly gowned, haughty women of the court wait to see the dénouement of the farce. They look with sniffing disdain on the poorly dressed peasant girl from Lorraine. Joan enters. Bluebeard, who sits on the throne, says:

"You are in the presence of the Dauphin."

Joan looks at him skeptically for a moment, scanning him hard up and down to make sure. Dead silence, all watching her. Fun dawns in her face.

Joan: "Coom, Bluebeard! Thou canst not fool me. Where be Dauphin?"

She picks Charles out and drags him to the centre of the stage. Then she tells him that she has a message from God for him. Charles tells her that he does not want to hear any message from God.

Joan: "I tell thee it is God's business we are here to do! Not our own. I have a message to thee from God, and thou must listen to it, though thy heart break with the terror of it!"

Charles: "I am afraid."

Joan: "I shall put courage into thee!"

Charles: "But I don't want to have courage put into me. I want to sleep in a comfortable bed, and not live in a continual terror of being killed or wounded. Put courage into the others, and let them have their bellyful of fighting; but let me alone."

Joan: "It's no use, Charlie, thou must face what God puts on thee!"

Charles is not deeply impressed by Joan's idealism, or her voices, or her messages from God. The very weakness of the subject on which she is working, the seeming cowardice, the apparent imbecility of Charles—makes the miracle of her achievement with him all the greater. Later, in the Epilogue of the play, when Joan comes back, after she had been burned, Charles tells her with great pride how he goes to battle at the head of his own troops, scales the ladders in the lead of his men; wades in mud in the moats up to his waist. He also tells her with great pride how they call him now "Charles the Victorious"!

So Jesus Christ does to a weakling; so Christ takes an unawakened soul and puts the courage of angels and archangels into him. This is what happens to a man or a woman or a child when God comes in. That life is remade. There is no weakness, there is no blot, there is no taint, there is no sin, that God, through Jesus Christ, cannot overcome with the magic of His infinite power.

One of the most stirring, thrilling human and spiritual teachings in this whole play is the way in which God, through Joan, the Maid, puts courage into this weakling, and makes a real king out of him, and better still, a real man out of him. In this Epilogue the

exact dialogue that goes on between Joan and Charles runs like this:

Joan: "How hast been, Charles, ever since?"

Charles: "Oh, not so bad. Do you know. I actually lead my army out and win battles? Down into the moat up to my waist in mud and blood. Up the ladders with the stones and hot pitch raining down. Like you."

Joan: "No! Did I make a man of thee after all, Charlie?"

Charles: "I am Charles the Victorious now. I had to be brave because you were!"

What a tremendous lesson is here. Men will be brave because we are brave! Men will be good because we are good! Men will be triumphant if we expect it of them. Men will be God-like if we are God-like. Men will see Christ through us, all ways, all wheres, if we are Christ-like.

But to go back to the scene where Joan first meets Charles, the weak Dauphin, the indifferent, the docile, the coward, and note the contrast.

We go back to where Joan is trying to deliver her message from God to Charles and note his indifference to Joan's idealism and to her passion:

Charles: "I don't want any message; but can you tell me any secrets? Can you do any cures? Can you turn lead into gold, or anything of that sort?"

Charles too is looking for "a sign" as men in the days of Jesus looked for a sign—that wicked and perverse generation which was always wanting Jesus to do some trickery—to work some miracle, and always

saying in so many words what Charles the weakling was saying to Joan:

"Can you turn lead into gold, or anything of that sort?"

And Joan replies: "I can turn thee into a king, in Rheims Cathedral; and that is a miracle that will take some doing, it seems."

And that is exactly what Joan did do, through sheer faith in her voices and her visions; and that is exactly what all men can do who have visions and who hear voices.

Charles: "Oh, if I only dare!"

Joan: "I shall dare, dare, and dare again, in God's name! Art for or against me?"

Moved by the contagion of her enthusiasm and the vision of what he may be; urged by her faith, he cries out:

"I'll risk it. I warn you I shan't be able to keep it up; but I'll risk it."

Then he calls them all back into the throne room and gives the command of the armies to Joan, plunging desperately on this decision. Joan turns to the crowd which had hooted her before, and challenges them all:

Joan: "Who is for God and his Maid? Who is for Orleans with me?"

She flashes out her white sword as she divines that her hour has come.

LaHire (carried away, draws also): "For God and His Maid! To Orleans!"

All of the Knights (following his lead with enthusiasm): "To Orleans!"

Joan, radiant, falls on her knees in thanksgiving to God. They all kneel except the Archbishop, who gives his blessing to Joan with a sign.

Scene Three

ORLEANS—THE SOUTH BANK OF THE LOIRE

Dunois, the young commander of the French armies, has his tent on the Loire, commanding a view up and down the river. He has his lance stuck up with a flag on it watching for a change in the wind. He has been praying for a west wind so his boats can attack Orleans.

The French are afraid to attack Orleans directly by the bridge.

Joan comes running up to the Bastard and tries to persuade him to attack by the bridge. He is vacillating and weak. Joan tries to encourage him.

Joan: "Do you know that I bring you better help than ever came to any general or any town?"

Dunois (smiling patiently): "Your own?"

Joan: "No; the help and counsel of the King of Heaven. Which is the way to the bridge?"

Dunois: "Be quiet and listen to me. The English have more than ten times ten goddams in those forts to hold them against us."

Joan: "They cannot hold them against God."

Joan was right. It reminds us of what Woodrow Wilson in his dying days said to Ray Stannard Baker, when Baker visited him in Washington, and was lamenting the status of the League of Nations movement. The sick man half lifted his body on his elbow and said: "Never mind, Baker. Don't be discouraged. We're right, and they can't fight God!"

"If God be for thee, who can be against thee?"

Joan: "Our men will take them. I will lead them."

Dunois: "Not a man will follow you."

Joan: "I will not look back to see whether anyone is following me. I am not a daredevil; I am a servant of God. My sword is sacred; I found it behind the altar in the church of St. Catherine, where God hid it for me; and I may not strike a blow with it. My heart is full of courage, not of anger. I will lead; and your men will follow; that is all I can do. But I must do it; you shall not stop me!"

The old-young soldier is stirred, challenged by Joan's faith. He almost believes in it himself. He appeals to her to pray God for a west wind.

"Let Him send a wind then. My boats are downstream; they cannot come up against both wind and current. We must wait until God changes the wind."

Joan: "Oh yes, you are right. I will pray; I will tell Saint Catherine; she will make God give me a west wind. Quick; show me the way to the church."

Suddenly the page-boy sneezes; the pennant at the top of the lance begins to flutter eastward; a west wind is blowing. The page shouts with instant excitement:

Page: "Seigneur! Seigneur! Mademoiselle!"

Joan: "What is it? The kingfisher?" (She looks inquiringly up the river.)

Page: "No, the wind! the wind! the wind! The boats have put off! They are ripping upstream like anything!"

Dunois: "Now for the forts! You dared me to follow. Dare you lead? For God and St. Denis!"

Page: "The Maid! The Maid! For God and the Maid!"

Scene Four

A TENT IN THE ENGLISH CAMP—THE EARL OF WARWICK

Three men talk, an English chaplain priest, the Earl of Warwick, and the Bishop. They are all plotting against Joan. The Earl desires her downfall because she is driving the English out of France. The chaplain hates her personally. The Bishop is fearful for the authority of the Church if Joan gets by with her direct communications from God. It was the same fear they had of Martin Luther. Revelations must come through the Catholic Church. If Joan is allowed to live, the Church has lost its power over people. It is a diabolical plot to burn an innocent child. The Chaplain sums up the entire scene in his indignant comments on Joan as a rebel:

"She rebels against Nature by wearing man's clothes and fighting. She rebels against the Church by usurping the divine authority of the Pope. She rebels against God by her damnable league with Satan and his evil spirits against our army. And all of these

rebellions are only excuses for her great rebellion against England. That is not to be endured! Let her perish! Let her burn! Let her not infect the whole flock! It is expedient that one woman die for the people!"

Scene Five

THE AMBULATORY OF RHEIMS CATHEDRAL

The scene opens with Joan on her knees praying in the little chapel. Jack Dunois calls her away from her prayers. Joan wants to go on and take Paris, but the whole world seems against her. Suddenly she stands still. A tense hush of holiness comes over the two of them as the Cathedral chimes begin to ring overhead.

Joan: "Jack, the world is too wicked for me. Only for my voices I should lose all heart. That is why I have to steal away to pray here alone after the coronation. I'll tell you something, Jack. It is in the bells I hear my voices. Not today when they all rang; that was nothing but jangling. But here in this corner, where the bells come down from Heaven and the echoes linger, or in the fields where they come from a distance through the quiet of the countryside, my voices are in them. (The cathedral clock chimes the quarter.) Hark! (She becomes rapt.) Do you hear? 'Dear-child-of-God'; just what you said. At the half hour they will say 'Be-brave-go-on!' At the three quarters they will say, 'I-am-thy-help!' But it is at the hour, when the great bell goes, 'God-will-save-France!' "

Charles has been crowned and enters the Ambulatory. He is complaining about how heavy the coronation

robes have been, how heavy the crown is on his head, how rancid the Holy Oil; with no thought of gratitude to Joan. Joan appeals to him to go on and take Paris; to "Strike while the iron is hot." Charles scorns her plea. The Archbishop tells her that they will burn her at the stake. Even her friend Jack tells her that it is impossible. She stands pathetically alone. Nobody believes in her. They all turn their backs on her. She sees that she is absolutely alone.

Joan: "Yes, I am alone on earth. I have always been alone. But do not think you can frighten me by telling me that I am alone. France is alone; and God is alone; and what is my loneliness before the loneliness of my country and my God? I see now that the loneliness of God is His strength. Well, my loneliness shall be my strength too; it is better to be alone with God; His friendship will not fail me, nor His counsel, nor His love. In His strength I will dare, and dare, and dare, until I die. I will go out now to the common people, and let the love in their eyes comfort me for the hate in yours. You will be glad to see me burnt; but if I go through the fire I shall go through it to their hearts for ever and ever. And so, God be with me!"

Scene Six

ROUEN, MAY 30, 1431. STONE HALL ARRANGED FOR
TRIAL

The Inquisitor, the Priests, the Bishops, are all arranged in a semicircle. Joan is brought in by the Executioner. The trial proceeds with much bitterness and

cruelty, with threats of torture, which make Joan shudder and turn pale. Finally, like a hunted animal, with death by fire awaiting her outside, the poor girl for a moment weakens—showing how human she is, after all—and recants—signs a paper saying that her voices have deceived her; that she has been wrong; and then learns that she is to be kept a prisoner for life. Then her old spirit comes flaming back into her body, she leaps to her feet, and grabs the paper she has just signed:

Joan: "Give me that writing. Light your fire; my voices were right! Yes, they told me that you were fools, and not to listen to your fine words, nor trust in your charity. I could drag about in a skirt; I could let the banners and the trumpets and the knights and soldiers pass me and leave me behind as they leave the other women, if only I could still hear the wind in the trees, the larks in the sunshine, the young lambs crying through the healthy frost, and the blessed, blessed church bells that send my angel voices floating to me on the wind. But without these things I cannot live; and by your wanting to take them from me, or from any human creature, I know that your counsel is of the devil, and mine is of God!"

This means Joan's death. The trial is thrown into turmoil. The sentence is quickly passed. The stake is ready. The English have been waiting with five hundred soldiers. The flames light up the Trial Hall where the Earl of Warwick stands alone, waiting—afraid to watch the girl's cruel death.

In comes the Chaplain, who said that he would burn

her with his own hands. He has seen her death. He is crazed with remorse.

Chaplain: "I let them do it! If I had known. I would have torn her from their hands! O God! You cannot tell what it means until you have seen it. Then, while it is blinding your eyes, stifling your nostrils, tearing your heart—then—then—(falling to his knees) O God, take away this sight from me! O Christ, deliver me from this fire that is consuming me! She cried to Thee in the midst of it: 'Jesus, Jesus, Jesus!' She is in Thy bosom; and I am in Hell for ever more!"

The Earl: "Come, man, you must pull yourself together."

Chaplain: "She asked for a Cross. A soldier gave two sticks tied together. Thank God he was an Englishman! I might have done it; but I did not; I am a coward, a mad dog, a fool! Some of the people laughed at her! They would have laughed at Christ!"

In the midst of the Chaplain's madness, which reminds us of Judas and his remorse, there enters Ladvenu. He speaks.

Ladvenu: "I took this Cross from the church for her that she might see it to the last; she had only two sticks that she put into her bosom. When the fire crept around us, and she saw that if I held the cross before her I should be burnt myself, she warned me to get down and save myself. My lord: a girl who could think of another's danger in such a moment was not inspired of the devil. When I had to snatch the cross from her sight, she looked up to Heaven. And I do not believe that the heavens were empty.

I firmly believe that her Savior appeared to her then in His tenderest glory. She called to Him and died. This is not the end for her, but the beginning!

Last of all enters the Executioner. He reports to the Earl of Warwick of Joan's death, and tells the Earl in these words of her end:

Executioner: "Her heart would not burn, my lord; but everything that was left is at the bottom of the river. You have heard the last of her."

Warwick (with a wry smile): "The last of her? Hmm. I wonder?"

Men do not hear the last of martyrs who died for their dreams and their visions; who suffer the stake and the guillotine for their ideas, their ideals and their God. The Epilogue to this play shows that. History has proven it in innumerable instances. Jesus Christ is the great flaming illustration of it.

"Galilean, Thou hast conquered!" cried Justinian.
"Galilean, Thou hast conquered!" cries the world which falls at the foot of the Cross.

Edwin Markham puts it all in two lines:

"Then something sacred whispers from the skies;
Then something deathless looks from dying eyes!"

"And I heard a voice," said both John and Joan!
And each and all dreamers, like them, have heard the same voice. Whose voice is it?

Answer: It is God's voice:

"Dear-child-of-God;
Be-brave-go-on!
I-am-thy-help!
God-will-save-France!"

CHAPTER III

"THE BIG PARADE"

By LAWRENCE STALLINGS

A MESSAGE OF REALITY AND LIFE

"Lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be ye lifted up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of Glory shall come in."—Psalms 24:7.

We all love a parade.

None of us shall ever forget the glory-days of the Circus Parade; the everlasting boyhood memory of that sublime dawning when the circus unloaded. The first parade we saw on that dawn, before daylight, was the unloading of the wagons. We can still hear the rumbling of the big wheels; we can still see the sleepy-eyed workmen, the mystery that was behind the closed cages, the roar of the lion, the chatter of monkeys, the smell of cooking mingled with trampled sod, the glow of excitement, the big elephants which were used to pull the great lumbering wagons.

The first parade of the circus was the parade from the train to the circus grounds in the early dawn.

Some of us can even remember the days when the circus came in on its own wheels and didn't even use the trains. We can remember them coming over the hill and down along the river road, through the town, lurching through the mud and over the cobblestones to the circus grounds.

Weaver in his new book of verse called "More in America" has a poem called "Circus" which gives a perfect picture of this classical American boyhood memory, and it is worth reading for the tragedy and pathos and glory of it. It is too long to quote here, but it is worth reading.

Then there was the morning free parade, with most of the animal wagons closed to whet the appetite, and what glory of romance was there, and still is, in memory!

Then there was the big parade which opened the circus itself, the "Big Parade" that wheeled around the big tent to start the show. No wonder Weaver found poetry and romance in that "Big Parade." We all do.

Fire wagons rushing through our streets by night or day are a form of parade that fascinates human beings. Mrs. Stidger never misses a parade of fire wagons going by. She is from a very small town. She will waken me in the middle of the night any time to see a fire engine go by. I have never been able to break her of that habit.

The other day I was in New York City and was told by a newspaper friend that there are half a dozen wealthy men in New York who go to every big alarm. They have bells in their apartments which ring when a four-alarm turns in. They have this as their pet recreation—going to fires. They give generous gifts to the fire-fighters. It is a beautiful survival of that ancient glory of boyhood days. We all have it. It is a fascination that parades have for us.

The parades of the little German bands which tell us, along with pussy willows, robins, colds, sassafras

tea;—and, in these later days, fall bonnets—that Spring has come. When we hear the little German band we know for a certainty, whatever the weather man says pro or con (mostly con), that Spring is here.

Most of us can remember the old torch-light parades of the political days of the early nineties, when we were permitted to carry a torch for Cleveland, or Harrison, in the parades. Those were the "good old days." Political campaigns have lost much of their romance since those glorious days.

We all like the Academic Parades in colleges. We like to be in them and we like to watch them. We human beings love parades.

In boyhood, we used to get up parades ourselves to entertain the general public, and I doubt very much if there is a single grown-up who has not at some time or another gotten up a parade.

Even the women like parades, for we have an American institution which is called "The Fashion Parade on Fifth Avenue" every Easter Sunday morning. It originated in the days when men and women walked to church on Fifth Avenue, but now it is continued by men and women who never go to church, but who like to show off their new Easter clothes. There is nothing an American likes so much as a parade.

We get up a parade on every occasion. The other day I saw a Masonic parade. Business men marched solemnly by in their little red caps, some on foot and some riding horses more or less awkwardly; some tooting horns, some fat, some slim, some of them slumped over, some of them with shoulders up and heads high—preachers, business men, taking

part in America's chief "Outdoor Sport"—a parade.

But the parades that we shall never forget will be the parades of soldiers during war time. These shall live in our memories for ever. These shall live because our loved ones were marching, some of them to death, some of them never to come back; drums playing, soldiers in uniform, some of them rookies; all of them ours. It was glorious, it was pathetic, it was tragic. Our fathers, our brothers, our husbands, marched in these "Big Parades."

I saw the California Bears march down Market Street. I stood on top of a city building and looked down upon that mass of marching men. Market Street was jammed for five miles; jammed with humanity marching and watching that "Big Parade."

I saw the First Division come back to New York with General Pershing at its head, march down Fifth Avenue in New York City; that division which went over first and came back last. That was a scene never to be thought of without tears and laughter and love. Down through the arch of the Soldiers' Memorial, marching, marching, all morning long, boys who had been in it from the beginning; heroes; triumphant, come home; glorious, tragic, beautiful—tragic because of those who did not come back; tragic because of the mothers who lined the streets watching for forms that would never march again.

We all love it; we cannot deny it; "The Big Parade."

PROCESSIONALS AND PARADES OF THE PSALMS

They liked parades and processions in the Old Testament days also. Human nature has been the

same the centuries through; the world over. In every nation on the face of the earth which I have visited I have spent a large part of my time watching and photographing parades.

In the Oriental world; China, Korea, Japan; everywhere man lives; not a day goes by that some kind of a parade is not to be seen. One of the chief delights of tourists is watching processions and parades. Funeral processions miles long, weird music, hilarity, shouting, celebration, all commingled. It would be like trying to describe a range of mountains in a single sermon to try to describe these incessant and everlasting parades of the Oriental world. Grotesque, weird, strange music, strange litters, Emperor's funerals, pageantry, processions—every day and everywhere.

I have never been in Europe that I have not seen incessant parades also. Holland is the worst place for parades in Europe. They love a parade in Holland. Every lodge, every Sunday school, every club, has to have a parade every time it gets together. Look out of a hotel window any time, day or night, in Holland, and you will see a parade. It is the same in any European country. They dote on parades. All humanity does.

The Psalms are full of parades and processions. The Hebrew loved a procession. It was a part of his religion. He worshipped God through Processions. The Hebrew did not just go to church. He paraded to church. He marched to church; he went up to the temple in a procession.

We human beings have always loved a parade. The 24th and the 68th Psalms are perfect descriptions of

Biblical parades. Read them and have your soul lifted up with the tramp, tramp, tramp, and the chant, chant, chant of countless human beings marching toward God. The world has marched for ever Godward through its processions. Life has been one long and glorious parade of humanity toward God and Eternity.

One writer in describing the 68th Psalm says: "It leaps and dances until one feels he has caught the joyful step of marching crowds." . . .

Or: "It then steadies its movement until one feels the stately dignity and impressive tread of mighty hosts. . . . Then it shouts and sings until one feels the joy and lyric quality; until he almost feels like singing with them."

"The Psalm begins with a triumphant reference to the past as if to prove that God's activities are permanent. Then follows a battle hymn in which one feels the shock of battle and clash of arms. Then comes the return to Jerusalem, Jehovah a victor. The ark is brought in triumph back to the temple. 'The singers went before, the minstrels followed after, in the midst of the damsels playing the timbrels.' "

It is a glorious Psalm, this 68th; a perfect description of Jehovah's armies going forth to war, the clash of battle, the pæan of victory, the triumphal procession back to the Temple of God.

It is but a symbol of Triumphal Processions all through history. I stood under the arch of Titus, at the end of the Appian Way, and brought back to memory the everlasting parades of Roman Emperors with their chariots rumbling, their captive girls, and their long processions of slaves, after a victorious con-

quest; marching, marching, for days at a time through that arch into Rome, greeted by the mad populace. It is a glorious picture. It is a tragic picture. It is ever a spectacular picture; this picture of victorious Roman armies marching through that Arch of Titus in Rome; that Appian Way over which Paul walked in lonely grandeur, with only a little group of Christian martyrs to keep him company.

And yet—which of these parades has survived? That is a startling thought. Not the Roman parades of splendid spectacles. The lonely tragic group of martyred Christians; women and girls, noble boys and women—these remain; the others die in the world's annals.

I have also stood under the Arch of Triumph on the Champs d'Elysses in Paris, that arch built by Napoleon to celebrate his victories, through which his great armies marched in triumph, through which the Kaiser had planned for his armies to march into Paris, through which the armies of the Allies marched on Armistice Day in a procession that the world will never forget.

I have stood under the Arch of Triumph in Brussels, under which the Kaiser's armies goose-stepped in the early days of the Great War, and through which our soldiers saw the Germans retreat in evacuating Brussels.

It is all mixed up—processions of war, processions of victory, processions of religion. It is all mixed up because we are all mixed up in our human emotions.

We celebrate everything with a parade. We want to be a part of the "Big Parade." We are but children,

after all. We celebrate war with a parade, we celebrate death with a parade, we celebrate academic honours and Commencements with a parade, we celebrate weddings with a parade, and we even use the goose-step in our weddings. At least it looks like a goose-step when the best man, the father, and the preacher attempt it. It looks like a procession of angels when the girls do it. They do it properly and beautifully. They ought to. Every woman trains in her soul from childhood to do this goose-step at her wedding. She thinks of that parade morning, noon, and night from girlhood. That, to her, is "The Big Parade." She turns that goose-step into a swan-step. She is born to the manner. I have had a part in many such parades, and I never saw a woman that did it awkwardly. I never saw a man that did it gracefully.

We celebrate everything with a parade. It is born in us. And the most vivid pictures of parades that you will find in all literature are in the Book of Books. You can hardly step into the cities of the Bible that you do not hear the sound of music, the tinkling of cymbals, the blare of trumpets, the beating of drums. You can hardly step out of one village of the Bible into another that you do not see a parade or a processional somewhere about. It is a fascinating book of parades everywhere.

It is a Book of Nature, it is a Book of great Dramas, it is a Book of beautiful Poetry. It is a Book of Gardens. It is a Book of War. It is a Book of Miracles. But, thank God, it is a Book of everlasting, fascinating parades and processions.

THE BIG PARADE OF THIS GENERATION

The "Big Parade" of this particular generation was the World War. It has been dramatized in a motion picture.

There is a little booklet issued by this picture. It shows a marching army of American soldiers. They have their steel helmets on. One carries a girl on his shoulders. She waves a handkerchief. Guns are over their shoulders. They wind like a serpent across the front page of that picture, marching, marching, marching for ever across that page of history.

The publishers write this foreword in their program:

"The Big Parade goes forth to the world with the happy pride of its makers. You will find that this brave tale of the humours and the thrills of war days has been told honestly. Memorable days! Slowly the scars heal, leaving us with tenderly fresh memories of our boys, off to a great adventure, laughing, swearing, romancing, gone on the grandest lark of history, The Big Parade."

The publishers and producers are right. It is an honest picture. I have seen it. I saw it through the war in France and at home. It is an honest picture. They are right in calling that adventure a lark. They are right to say that our boys went marching, and swearing, and romancing "on the grandest lark in history." It was all of that. That is the hell of it!

THE FIRST PARADE OF THE BIG PARADE

The first of the big parades of the war we see in the little home town. There are several pictures of quiet homes, business offices, men swinging at work on steel sky-scrapers, mills belching out the smoke of a quiet and peaceful industry, great train-yards throbbing with the commerce and transportation of peaceful products.

Then suddenly the whistles blow, the bells ring, the world stops. This hour comes in the picture and finds a great lanky steel-worker with a plug of tobacco in his mouth, swinging on a steel girder, riveting bolts. He hears the whistles. He thinks it is time to quit work. Then he hears a cry: "War! We're in the war!" He almost drops from the twelfth story to the pavement. He is ready, and he chews his tobacco to the tune of "Over There."

A bar-keeper is washing dishes and polishing glasses when he hears the whistles blowing. He too, drops his rag and starts.

A rich boy in a barber shop stops in the midst of getting a shave and rushes home to say good-bye to his sweetheart, and his father and mother.

The first parade is formed and is marching far too soon for mothers and fathers. The little town is stirred to its soul. Work stops. Wheels cease their turning. The boys march through the streets.

Jim Apperson; a rich man's son, stands in his automobile watching that first parade march through the town. He leaps up in the car, waves his hands and cries: "I'm coming with you, boys!"

That was the first of the big parades. We all saw them in every little town and every city of America, as did the other nations. These were the parades of pathos and pity. These were the simple parades of noise, and beating drums, and singing, and shouting, and hilarity.

THE SECOND OF THE PARADES

The second of the big parades was in France, when the untried American boys marched from the train into their billets in some French stable, dirty and vile. We see them in this picture, marching with their heavy packs, and their heavier army coats and army woollen underwear, their puttees, which they haven't yet learned to wrap properly, dragging on the ground behind them, tired, muddy, dirty, lonely. This second parade is something of a triumph. The French children hail them with shouts, the French girls kiss them, the French men kiss them also, and on both cheeks. They are the saviours of France.

I have seen so many of these parades. It was beautiful while it lasted. I went to France early in the war. I remember how the women threw their coats in the streets for our soldiers to march over. I remember the flowers they scattered along the way. I remember the tears, and the laughter, the little American flags, ludicrously small, in the hands of mothers and girls in black, who had already given all they had to the war. I remember the hysteria, the tears, the sense of a new Messianic hope which America brought to France. It was glorious while it lasted.

We see this second division of the "Big Parade" as it marches into a French village in a grand procession

of triumph. The French women of this village, as in countless French villages, sincerely and beautifully welcomed our boys in that parade as if they were angels from Heaven. Then we see them, weary of body and soul, march into French stables; into dirt, and stench, and manure; to sleep with the cattle and the dogs.

It is one grand mixture of manure, glory, music, laughter, love, romance, tragedy, heartache, blood, beauty, flowers, hate, hurt, hopelessness, heaven—and death.

THE THIRD OF THE GREAT WAR PARADES

I saw them all. I know whereof I speak. The third of the parades was a night parade. This time the boys did not have to walk. They were hauled—hauled in great lorries.

The order was given quietly. In the picture we see buglers standing on the corners of village streets blowing their bugles with gusto. That did not happen. That is all right for dramatic purposes. That is one of the minor untruths. It is done for those who were not there. We know that when that third parade started, there was a hush on every heart. There was quiet in the little French village. The order was passed down secretly. The men were to go in that night. There was no gusto about it at all. It was serious business.

Dr. Poling was standing one night when a regiment was going in. He was standing reading his Bible. A boy saw him and bashfully walked up to him and said: "Say, mark this Bible of mine, will you, old top, before I go down the line? Mark some good lines, Buddy!"

Another boy saw him marking that first boy's Bible and he came up and said: "Mark mine too, pal!"

He finished that one and another boy stepped up: "Mine too, sir, if you please!"

He stood there for five hours marking Bibles, and before he was through he didn't know whether he was laughing or crying. And neither did I when he told me about it.

One boy said to me, showing me his Bible: "That's been in the trenches three times. It's been across the Atlantic. It's been in Paris. It's been in the Argonne. It's been in England. It's been under shell-fire a dozen times. It's been in gas attacks. It's been everywhere that I've been, and, by heck, it's going to keep on going right with me wherever I go."

Then this picture shows the boys marching out of the French village. Mesilande has fallen in love with Jim. They had had several months together in the French village. They truly loved each other. The little French girl hears the rumour that the regiment is going down the line. That means that her Jim is going in. She knows what that means. She has lost a father and a brother. She knows that going down the line means death. She has no doubts about that "Big Parade." She starts out in search of Jim. She cannot find him. War is pitiless. Officers have no place for romance and farewells. The most vivid moment of the picture comes as we see Mesilande trying to find Jim in that never-ending column of marching soldiers. Who shall try to describe it? Not I. Like a stricken thing she rushes out into the street, runs wildly through line after line, peering under steel helmets

to find her Jim to say good-bye. It is the pathos, the tragedy, the loneliness of all war shot into one pathetic French girl's tragedy. When the last of that lone line marches by, there come the lorries. She sees Jim. She leaps up on the side of one of the lorries to kiss him good-bye. The lorry moves on. She runs after it. She clings to it. She tries to pull it back with her feeble hands. At last she sinks to the dusty road, stricken and beaten and alone. The sun sinks.

Through the night this parade moves on, in a winding zigzag. There is an incessant rumbling of lorries. Boys are standing up. Guns are packed in the rear. There is no room to sit down.

I was driving back from the front lines one night. A sentry halted me and said: "You'll have to stop here. A regiment is going in." I stopped my truck. For three hours that silent procession of lorries went by. Not a word was spoken, not a cigarette was lighted, not a whisper or a whistle was heard. That incessant procession of lorries passed by, that parade of American soldiers. We were close to the German lines. For three hours I did not hear the sound of a human voice. It was terrible. It was the "Big Parade."

THE FOURTH BIG PARADE

You see it in the picture. The order has come to take a certain wood. The march across the field begins. You see the long line, walking, not running. You see them drop one by one as a terrific machine gun fire pours into them. You first see the German nest, pumping death. You hear the rattle. You see Americans dropping everywhere. The orders have been to march in

parade formation. They keep it up, those who survive.

Now and then a sniper from a treetop drops some of the marchers in this fourth parade. There is a sudden shock, a man falls, a spasm of pain and surprise, he drags a few feet forward and then lies quiet while his comrades pass over him. Joyce Kilmer, the poet, fell like this, face forward, among the "Trees."

That parade moves on, through the woods, captures the machine gun nests; on and on and on; into the trenches, where for long days and nights they live and laugh and die in mud and blood and stench. It is a parade, that march through the woods—but oh, what an inglorious parade!

An old man, a "Y" secretary, over sixty, saw his boys go in one morning. He was too old to go along. They wouldn't let him. He climbed into a tree.

"Another minute and my boys will be going in. I was not with them. The thought broke my heart. Then up there in that tree I watched them go over the top. I couldn't distinguish their forms for the fog in the valley, but I said to God, 'Right down there, God—in the fog—my boys—and my own boy—and *your* boys, God—are going over. Take care of them, God! Go with them. Bless them. Keep them. And if they die—if any boy dies, if my boy dies—take them to Thine arms of Love, for Jesus' sake. Amen!"

THE FIFTH OF THE BIG PARADES

The advance is over.

The wounded are parading back. The ambulances are rushing through the night with tossing, wounded

boys in them. It is a strange and straggling procession.

I have seen them coming back. One needs to see that particular parade to get the full meaning of "The Big Parade." It is not all romance. It is not all adventure. It is not all laughing and swearing.

I have a friend who watched the English Tommies coming back from Ypres. He was with an English officer. It was dawn. The valley was filled with fog. The officer spoke and said: "Right down there the boys will go over. In one minute!"

Said my friend: "I never before knew what silence meant. The big guns had stopped. The artillery had been at it for an hour. That was the minute. In the silence I looked up and saw an old battered tree which had been shelled to pieces until it looked like a cross in the fog. . . ."

"In the afternoon I saw them come back from that fight. The walking-wounded came first, in an everlasting procession. They did not look like human beings. They were bloody, mangled masses of flesh. Their clothing was torn from their bodies by the barbed wire. Some were crawling. They carried each other. One boy with his face shot away carried his pal, whose leg was dangling. He had been shot through the cheek. His face was a mass of blood and mud. He grinned and said: "Aw, it don't hurt much. Both me arms and legs are good, and I can carry me pal."

"Came an English Tommie carrying a wounded German on his shoulders. I saw a Tommie light a cigarette and give it to a German soldier whose arms were gone."

This is also a picture in the play. The quotation I

give you in this sermon is from one of my own war books. Mr. Stallings got the same picture some place. It is a true picture. It is not beautiful, but it IS a parade. It is a parade of war which we ought not soon to forget.

There is another parade. I saw it at Saveney after the Chateau Thierry drive had been going two weeks. This time it was a trainload of our wounded. They were bringing them back to the Base Hospital.

I stood and watched and helped them all day. It took all day to unload that train of wounded. There were men without legs, and men without arms; with eyes gone, throats burned out; battered, broken, wounded; for ever useless and hopeless. Let us not forget that part of "The Big Parade."

THE SIXTH OF THE BIG PARADES

The war is over. They are home again. The news has spread. The town is out to welcome the boys home. The "Big Parade" is about over.

There is triumph and tragedy. Many mothers wait in wistful sorrow. The towns and cities turn out for that parade. I saw one in New York when Pershing and the First Division came home. I saw one in California when the Bears came home. Those were great and triumphant hours. They shall live for ever. The Parade up Market Street started out in orderly fashion, in military formation. Then a mother would see her boy and dart into the line. Then I saw a girl with a baby in her arms—his baby—leap past a policeman through that military line, and hand that baby to its father, his first sight of it. I saw a policeman brush

the tears from his eyes at this sight. I brushed more away myself. I knew what it meant. It was "The Big Parade."

I saw them go away. I saw them come home. Like a wistful boy, wondering what it was all about, I followed "The Big Parade" from the day it started until it ended. I saw every phase of it.

Then that Market Street line broke. In spite of military training and military orders, that line became a mass of humanity. Men broke ranks. I saw an old father marching with his boy's arms about him. I saw sisters marching with their brothers. I saw men carrying their babies in that parade. They would not let them down. I saw that military line break and crumble until Market Street was once again a solid mass of humanity, laughing, shouting, crying, drums beating, trumpets blowing. And—so they thought—the "Big Parade" was over.

But was it over?

THE LAST OF THE BIG PARADE

That did not end the "Big Parade," friends. I wish that it had.

It ended last week in Los Angeles, eight years after the war, for us.

Bill Mortimer was our friend, our dearest boy friend. His father was tubercular, but Bill was athletic and vigorous. He too, went into the "Big Parade." He went in at the first. He went through it all. He marched in all of the parades I have talked about.

He even marched in the "Big Parade" in the Persh-

ing Stadium, for he was an athlete. He won eight or ten medals in the Olympic Meet in Paris. He was in the parade that circled around that Pershing Stadium to receive the honours and medals that were due.

I have often looked at his medals. I used to love to tease him about bringing home medals from war "For Running." I have teased him about everything that a friend teases about when he loves a man.

In 1920 he first came into my life. He walked up to the altar of St. Mark's. That morning I had mentioned my college fraternity. He was a member of my fraternity. His black eyes flashed as he showed me the old pin on his vest; and his hand-clasp was warm as he gave me the grip. He was glorious youth. He had just happened into that church service my first year in Detroit. From that minute on, we were friends with a friendship like unto that of Jonathan and David. He was the David. Michael Angelo knew his kind when he moulded that immortal white figure of Youth named David—that tall and beautiful figure of Youth in Florence, Italy. I saw it there. I see it now. I saw it symbolically in Bill Mortimer.

We played tennis together and he beat me. He liked to do that, because I had teased him about those medals he got "For Running" in the war.

He had no home, so he came into our home for two years. He was there like a member of the family, night and day. Betty called him her "Big Brother," and how they did love each other, Bill and Betty.

We found a sweetheart for him in our church. One day in an afternoon wedding Helen and Bill walked up to the altar of the church, with Betty as flower girl,

and the most beautiful wedding I have ever seen took place. The beautiful girls dressed in white, the beautiful flowers, the church full of friends; Helen, small, light, timid, wistful; Bill, big, tall, black hair, back eyes, handsome; a gentleman and a Christian; pure as a woman he came to Helen; a little too pale, because the war had awakened an old enemy, and we knew it not.

Three swift but terrible years pass. Another battle is on, a battle that started in France in wet trenches, and on long marches, and in Pershing Stadium.

There was a summer in Arizona at a Government Hospital and the sun treatment. There was hope, and back to work again. There was a final move to California. Last summer we were to have seen him; but a trip to the Holy Land intervened, and Bill was broken-hearted, so Helen wrote. If we had but known, both of us would have postponed that trip to the Holy Land.

Last week came the shocking wire from Helen: "Bill died this afternoon. Dr. Freeman will conduct the funeral."

Bobby Freeman and I were in France together with Bill. Bobby took Bill to his last resting-place on the side of a little knoll near Los Angeles under California's sunny skies; skies like France.

Amid the golden poppies he lies, he who marched in "The Big Parade" amid the crimson poppies of France.

A letter came, and Helen said: "In my boy's last and terrible delirium, his mind wandered all over the world; and you will be interested in one thing he said. I listened for every word. It was just a half hour be-

fore the end. He stopped talking, and then said: 'Helen, Bill preached a good sermon this morning.' "

Do we think the "Big Parade" ended when the boys marched home? It did not. In this very city there is a hospital full of them. In Detroit there was another. I wrote a story about it for a Detroit paper and I called it "The House of Forgotten Heroes." That is the best name for it.

They are scattered all over America; these boys who are broken and shattered by the war. They drop off now and then, and some heart and some home is stricken and lonely. They would be alive today, strong and well, if they had not marched in "The Big Parade."

No; "The Big Parade" did not end when the boys marched down Fifth Avenue and Market Street and Woodward Avenue and State Street and Broadway. It ended in California when they took Bill Mortimer's body to a California grave. "The Big Parade" is not yet over! Let us not forget that!

CHAPTER IV

"BEN HUR"

BY GENERAL LEW WALLACE

A TALE OF THE CHRIST

"And lo, the star went before them."—Matthew 2:9.

In another chapter we will study the spiritual values of that great pageant-drama, "The Miracle."

The great miracle to me is the fact that people always crowd to the limits the theatres in which these plays appear, the one a great pageant and the other a motion picture production.

Another miracle to me is the fact that this great book "Ben Hur" has been a best seller for forty-five years. It has gone into unnumbered editions.

After the book came the miracle of the great stage-play founded on this book of the Christ. Most of us of the middle generation can remember seeing this play on the stage with its famous treadmill horse race. How thrilling that piece of stagecraft was, with those horses thundering across the stage in a death grapple.

Then we thought that "Ben Hur" was through, this strange tale of the Christ. We had seen it go through its run as a great book. We had seen it go through fifteen years of stage production. Now we have it in one of the most tremendous motion pictures that has been screened before the American public.

When we think of "Ben Hur," we think of that other great motion picture, "The Ten Commandments," and we believe that we are on the edge of a new era in motion pictures, when great Biblical and religious themes will be presented. Which can mean but one thing. What? That the people of these United States will support great religious books and plays and pictures better than they will support the lesser things, which have their day, and which, like chaff, the wind driveth away.

"Ben Hur" was written by General Lew Wallace. He was not a professional writer, and this great book was written in the evenings and in his spare time. It was begun in 1875 and finished in 1880.

General Lew Wallace finished this book in the Governor's Palace at Santa Fe. I have walked with reverent steps into that room and I have sat in the very chair and at the very desk where General Wallace, in long-hand, finished the last pages of this great book, and when I was there, I knew that I was standing on holy ground.

The genesis of his desire to write this story came from Robert Ingersoll, according to his own authorized story. General Wallace was on a train with Ingersoll going from Crawfordsville to Indianapolis in 1876. Ingersoll called him into his compartment on the train, and they had a debate about Christ. As a result of Ingersoll's questioning of the Divinity of Christ, General Wallace became greatly interested in this very truth.

He himself says: "To lift me out of my religious indifference, one would think that only strong affirma-

tions of things regarded holiest would do. Yet, here was I now moved as never before, and by what? "By the most outright denials of all human knowledge of God, Christ, Heaven and the Hereafter which figures so high in the hope and faith of the believing everywhere. Was the Colonel right? What had I to answer, yes or no? He had made me ashamed of my ignorance and—here is the unexpected of the affair—as I walked out in the cool darkness I was aroused for the first time in my life to the importance of religion."

Then General Wallace proceeded to write a book about Christ. Let him tell it in his own words:

"It only remains to say that I did as I resolved, with results—first, the book, 'Ben Hur,' and second, a conviction amounting to absolute belief in God and the Divinity of Christ."

I note that the program of the motion picture production of "Ben Hur" intimates that perhaps the story of General Wallace's conversion to Christ through this story may be merely a myth, but here is the testimony in his own words that he actually was converted to the divinity of Christ through the processes of studying about and writing about the Master. Jesus Christ became a great reality to General Wallace during the five years that this great task was his, and the great Christ was before his eyes and soul.

This to me is even a greater miracle than any of the others that I have mentioned in connection with the writing and playing of this great book.

Another miracle to me is the fact that General Wallace had never visited the Holy Land nor the setting of this tale himself until after he wrote it. And yet,

when he did visit these lands he said that he found no reason to change a single line of the book.

The story was written under a great beech tree at his home in Crawfordsville, Indiana. Its concluding pages were written in Santa Fe, where General Wallace had been sent as Governor of New Mexico before it became a state.

One of the curious things about this book is that it did not leap into popularity until three years after it was written, and then it went like wildfire from home to home, and store to store. Then it began to leap the mountains and the seas, and in a few years was translated into fifteen languages. It is said to have a circulation as large as the Bible at this very time. It is the only book in the world that had a single sale of a million copies, and that was ordered by a mail order house in Chicago.

It is nothing short of a miracle the way this book was written; the miracle of a transformed belief that came into the life of General Wallace himself, the miracle of writing the book without ever having been in the Holy Land; the miracle of its sale, the miracle of its long years on the stage, and now in the pictures, and the miracle of the story itself in which the miracle of the healed lepers is set forth.

THE STORY OF THE GREAT TALE AND ITS MUSICAL SCORE

One of the contributions that the motion picture of "Ben Hur" makes to the great book and original drama is the musical score, and I shall try to interpret that score as we go through this, the story of the play as it is focused on the screen.

General Lew Wallace spent a year on the story of the Three Wise Men. This is now included in a prelude to the book, as indeed it is to the motion picture production also.

I have had the joy of reading the book several times, of seeing the play twice, and of seeing the motion picture twice. Therefore I shall try to run through this Drama Sermon the story of the book, the play, the motion picture, and the musical score, side by side.

In the prelude to the book is told this beautiful story of the Three Wise Men from the East who saw His star and came to worship Him.

In the drama you see far off in the distance the star in the sky. You also see the Three Wise Men coming from different directions, growing larger and larger until at last they loom up in full-sized figures, riding camels on the stage itself, carrying on that marvellous conversation which is a part of the dialogue. Each man tells the other of his vision; of a voice that commanded him to follow a certain star and he would find the King of Kings in a lowly manger where that star rested.

But to my way of feeling, the motion picture presentation of this beautiful Prologue is the most effective that has ever been done, superior to the stage production in every way.

You see on the screen those beautiful Oriental lights. You see the purple skies of evening, and the sand dunes of the deserts under the purple light. You see the shining stars of that far and fair land. You see the Three Wise Men on their camels crossing the desert. You see the strange star in the sky. It is a star that seems

to take the shape of a Cross as it shines with splendid beauty in Oriental skies.

Then you see glimpses of Jerusalem and the gates of that great city with stars shooting in every direction in the skies. The people are running about terror-stricken. The earth is lighted up as if it were daylight with those shooting stars and that great lone blazing star in the skies. The people fall to the ground in fear and trembling.

You see the gates in Jerusalem. They are as light as day. For untold centuries shooting stars in the skies have moved people to great awe and reverence. They tell of shooting stars in Civil War days, and there is a superstition that preceding every great event the stars shoot.

Then you see a picture of the shepherds in the fields and the shooting stars, and the lone star of Bethlehem that shines over them. Then you see in this prelude to the real picture, the little Inn where Mary and Joseph are to stay for the night.

Just before the Inn scene at Bethlehem you were shown crowded Jerusalem where so many had come to be registered. You saw Mary the mother of Jesus riding on an ass; big with child, weary and worn, coming to be registered. You saw the holy look in her eyes, and the strange reactions of all who looked into her face. The picture makes you understand that here was no small happening, this passing by of the mother of Jesus. Every man, woman and child who looked into her beautiful eyes became transformed with a strange power. The mystery of the miraculous is abroad everywhere that this beautiful woman passes.

Even the Inn-keeper himself, hard-hearted as are so many inn-keepers, even to this day when "there is no room in the inn," turned Joseph down gruffly when he came to seek a place for his wife, but when he catches a glimpse of Mary's beautiful, unearthly, ethereal, spiritual face, you can see his own hard face soften, and he offers Joseph a place in the stable.

So the miracles continue. One of the most beautiful miracles in this prelude is the miracle of how everybody who looks into the face of this beautiful Madonna succumbs to her spiritual charm and power. There is such a light in her eyes as never was on land or sea.

Then back to the Three Wise Men again. They are at the gates of Bethlehem. Shining down over the minarets and towers and domes of that beautiful city, is the star. They stand still in awe and wonder for a few minutes and then:

"Their hearts beat fast; their souls thrilled; and they shouted as with one voice: 'The *star!* The *star!* God is with us!'"

And during this splendid and beautiful prelude to the picture, the orchestra is playing Schubert's "The Omnipotence" in C Major. This great music introduced Joseph leading the Madonna into the inn at Bethlehem.

It is in this prelude that we first see Esther, the beautiful daughter of Simonides, the slave of the Hur family. She here sees Ben Hur himself for the first time. He is a manly fellow, strong, bare-limbed, with a band about his hair. Esther is the daughter of Simonides, who keeps the business accounts of the old

and respected Hur family. She has a white dove, and the dove escapes and young Ben Hur catches it for her and restores it to her. It is a beautiful contrast. The Madonna has just passed by, on these very Jerusalem streets, symbol of the perfect flower of womanhood, of love and motherhood. Now comes Esther, dressed in white, with a white dove, symbol of the beauty and purity of young love. And yet she is a slave, Ben Hur's slave, but she knows it not.

During this showing of these scenes on the streets of Jerusalem between Esther and Ben Hur, a beautiful love-theme is played in F Major from Nougue's "Quo Vadis." The beautiful flute variations as the dove flies out of Esther's arms and is captured, are blended with the tender, caressing tone of the harp, as Ben Hur captures the dove and returns it to her.

So in the Prelude we have: The Three Wise Men from the East; the falling stars, the lone Star of Bethlehem; the mother of Jesus riding through the busy streets of Jerusalem on an ass; the refusal at the Inn; the shepherds watching in their fields by night, the stars over them; the birth of Jesus; and finally the meeting of Ben Hur and the beautiful slave girl, Esther.

THE HUR HOME AND THE TRAGEDY

What might be called the second part of this great picture is the Hur home and the tragedy that broke up that home and sent Hur to the galleys.

We see Ben Hur walking along the streets of Jerusalem after he has met Esther the slave girl. The

Roman soldiers are coming. They are headed by one Messala, who for years has been Ben Hur's friend. But he is a Roman, and he hates all Jews.

Ben Hur takes Messala to his home to see his mother and sister. Messala is familiar with that home, for when he was a boy, he used to play there with Ben Hur. They all welcome Messala back to the Hur home.

As Ben Hur stands with his arms about his mother and his sister, he looks at the armour-clad Messala, symbol of the power of Rome, and says:

"Five years since he left us, mother; and now he is a soldier, and hath the ear of Gratus."

There is a beautiful scene in this home. Then comes a dispute between Ben Hur and his old friend Messala, because Messala pours contempt upon the Jews. They quarrel, and Messala leaves.

There is a parade through the streets, and in leaning over the roof of their home, Ben Hur knocks off a tile and hits the voluptuous tyrant Gratus, who has just come from Rome to rule Jerusalem.

The soldiers rush up the stairs and arrest Ben Hur. He appeals to Messala, but Messala spurns his pleas. Messala is a symbol of the Power of Rome. His hard heart will not even listen to the pleas of Hur, who cries out as the soldiers drag the women away:

"Messala, by the memory of our childhood, speak the word of truth and free us!"

But Messala with his cruel Roman mind, not only turns Ben Hur over to the soldiers, but allows both the beautiful mother and sister to be sent to the dungeons and tombs.

Thus the ancient and honoured family of Hur is

wiped out over night. Simonides, the old slave, hides the securities of the Hur family and escapes with his beautiful daughter Esther. The two Hur women are thrown into the dungeons. Ben Hur is dragged off by the soldiers before the eyes of his former friend, Messala, and as they drag him away, with hands manacled, he cries out:

"Oh, Lord, in the hour of Thy vengeance—mine be the hand to put it on him!"

THE GALLEY SLAVE AND THE GALLEYS

Perhaps this is the most tremendous picture that has ever been filmed. It is so much more effective and dramatic than either the book or the legitimate drama, because so much more can be told in the picture than in the drama or the book.

We see the magnificent Roman galleys sweeping over the placid waters. We see the regular beat and rhythm of the oars sticking out through the galley sides. Then we are shown many interiors of these galleys and we look upon the man power that sends these great grey ships through the waters. The slaves are in three tiers, naked and beaten down like animals.

The slave driver stands at the end of the galleys beating time for each stroke. As we sit, we hear the pounding of his great hammer to strike the beat of the strokes. We are reminded of the beat and the count of the slave driver in "R.U.R." We are reminded of the tramp, tramp, tramp of marching feet in "The Enemy"; of the incessant beating of rain on the roof in "Rain"; of the far off sound of the drums in "The

Drums of Oude." So here the rhythmic beat of the great hammers to strike the stroke of the oars for the galley slaves is a terrible symbol of the power of Rome and Roman slavery.

In the picture there is a musical theme which swings its mighty stride into the sweep of the oars and the hammer strokes of the Hortator.

Then we see the approach of the pirate ships in the distance. The lookout in the crows' nest gives warning. Down in the hold of the ship where Ben Hur toils with his mighty athlete's shoulders, we see slave-drivers beating the shoulders of the slaves with great whips like the slave drivers use in "The Ten Commandments." We see one of them drop from his place, beaten to death.

We see Arrius, the Commander of these Roman galleys, won to Ben Hur. He sees this Jewish lad's fine face and great shoulders. He hears him call to a fellow-slave who prays for death: "Pray not for death, you coward. While your enemies live, pray for life!"

Arrius admires Ben Hur for his courage. He calls him to his cabin and asks him how long he has been a slave. Ben Hur replies:

"In thy calendar I have been a slave three years; in mine, three centuries!"

Arrius orders that the chains about Ben Hur be unlocked.

There is that terrible attack by the pirates; the rescue of Arrius by Hur; overboard into the sea; a later rescue by Roman relief ships. Ben Hur is acclaimed by Arrius as his adopted son on the decks of the rescue ship.

HIS LIFE IN ANTIOCH AND THE CHARIOT RACE

Back to Antioch and we see that strange and almost bewildering panorama of events which lead up to the chariot race.

We see Simonides and his beautiful daughter Esther. We see Simonides in his struggle. He knows that Ben Hur is not aware that he is a slave. The mother and sister, who do know, have disappeared. We see Simonides, the father, put the matter up to Esther. She it is who is to decide whether they shall tell Ben Hur the truth, that Simonides is a slave and that Esther is also Ben Hur's slave. Here we have the strange situation of a lover whose sweetheart, according to the Roman law, is his slave. Then Ben Hur in a dramatic scene gives everything back to Simonides in these words:

"All these things give I back to thee, Simonides, sealed to thee and thine for ever!"

And to Esther whom he loves, she who comes to tell him that she is his slave, he says: "Not my servant, Esther! Not my servant!"

Two things alone Ben Hur wishes: to beat Messala in the chariot races, and to find his mother and sister.

The Arabian sheik Ilderim has his beautiful white horses entered in the chariot races. His driver is injured. He hears of Ben Hur. Messala is to drive in that race; Ben Hur's former friend who betrayed him and his mother; who allowed his mother and sister to be sent to the tombs; and who allowed him to be sent to the galleys. He goes to the Arabian with this plea:

"One boon I pray—to drive thy Arab steeds in the race."

Then comes temptation to Ben Hur. Messala, the rich Roman, wants to know who it is that drives the Arabian steeds in the races, for that man is to be his rival. He knows that if those white steeds are well driven he may lose the race.

He sends the beautiful Egyptian, Iris, to find out who it is. She tempts Ben Hur, but he is too strong for her Egyptian wiles and rises in his manhood. He has two great missions; to find his mother and sister, and to win that race.

The Egyptian goes back and reports to Messala that his rival is one Ben Hur, and Messala turns pale. Now he has double reason for terror. Ben Hur has double reason to defeat him. There is a meeting of the two, hate flashing between them.

The day of the race comes. The Amphitheatre is crowded. The Egyptian woman, the Romans, the black horses driven by Messala, the white horses driven by Ben Hur.

Here is the most exciting scene ever dramatized in motion pictures. You see the race from beginning to end. You see round after round of that great course. You see the wild audience, you see Iris the Egyptian, you see the Romans, you see the gamblers in close-ups; you see Ben Hur running behind and you see Messala with his blacks forging to the front. You see a closeup of the chariots taken underneath the very wheels, and those flying vehicles come at you as if shot out of some great gun. You see that last final sheet of lightning when the Arabian steeds, driven

by Ben Hur, feel the slash of Messala's whips, and Ben Hur himself feels that whip across his own face, and then the flame of anger and revenge, the crossing of the white steeds just close enough to take Messala's wheels from his chariot; a crash—Messala's crippled form carried from the arena—Ben Hur triumphant.

The musical score for this scene runs a Messala theme and then a Ben Hur theme, all during the race alternately, as each driver forges to the front; then a revenge theme, and finally the crash and victory movements.

After the race is all over and he has had his revenge on Messala, who betrayed him and his mother and sister, Ben Hur has but one passion, and that is to find his mother and sister.

BEN HUR FINDS ALL THAT IS WORTH WHILE IN HUMAN LIFE

First of all, he finds that he loves and is loved by Esther, the slave girl. He gives back all that he has to Simonides and makes them both free.

All through the book and the play, Ben Hur has been hearing of Jesus Christ. First he hears of Him when he is but a boy, through the story of the Three Wise Men. He knows old Balthazar and hears the story of the Christ through him one eventful night on the roof of his own home, while the Wise Man points out that immortal star.

When he first hears of Christ, he looks upon Christ as an earthly king or Messiah who is coming to free the Jews from Roman rule, and when they tell him

that Christ is a Christ who is to build a Heavenly Kingdom in the hearts of men, and is not to overthrow Rome with arms, he sneers and says:

"Think you He can scatter the Roman Empire with prayers and sermons?" This idea that a spiritual king in a spiritual kingdom can overthrow the empire of power like Rome, is ridiculous to Ben Hur. It is hard for this young Jew to believe that Christ is a spiritual King. When they tell him about Christ another time, he leaps to his feet and cries:

"Oh, if He would only come now, rise up and lead us, how I would fight for Him!"

Every sentence that Ben Hur speaks makes us see that he is only thinking of Jesus as an earthly leader who is coming to overthrow the power of Rome and free his people, the Jews, from Roman captivity.

Once he asks with chagrin when he hears of Jesus again and a description of His coming: "This is no king! Where is His purple? Where is His crown?"

Then Ben Hur sees Jesus Himself. When he sees Him, he remembers a boy-carpenter who gave him water to drink when he was on his way to the galleys. He remembers the look of His face; the light that poured from His countenance; the touch of that boy Christ's hand on his hot head. He remembers that on that day a new strength poured into his body; strength to go on and endure the torture of the Roman guards; their whips, their brutality, their injustice.

Now he sees the Triumphal Entry and that same Jesus again, and he is beginning to understand that this Christ is something grander and greater than an earthly conqueror.

Then he sees the trial of Jesus, and he sees Jesus carrying His own cross through the streets of Jerusalem. He sees Jesus sinking beneath the burden of His cross, and runs to Him with lifted sword and offers that sword and the legions he has raised to help Jesus. But when Jesus looked into his eyes again, Ben Hur lifts his sword on high and then flings it away for ever. Now he knows that this Christ did not come to conquer with swords, as Rome conquered; but to conquer with love. One look into the face of Jesus made him understand that, and Ben Hur then and there threw his own sword away and pledged himself to follow the Christ for ever and a day.

Then the scene shifts to the dungeons where we find Ben Hur's mother and sister, both lepers. A new Governor has come to Jerusalem and Antioch, and a decree has gone out that all prisoners whose records are lost are to be freed. Esther has heard of Christ and that He can cure leprosy.

Ben Hur is frantically searching for his mother and sister. He comes back to their old home. The doors are locked. He falls asleep at the portals of that home. His mother and sister come and see him, but dare not touch him with their hands or lips because they are unclean; they are lepers. It is a pathetic scene; a mother and a daughter, finding their long-lost loved one but daring not to touch him in affection, either with lips or hands for fear they will give him their dread disease. Cries the mother: "He belongs to the living; we belong to the dead!"

Then Esther finds them and tells them of Jesus, who can cure their leprosy. She begs them to come with

her to see Him. There is a beautiful scene with Esther, who loves Ben Hur, on her knees with her arms about the mother and daughter—forgetting their leprosy—fearing it not now—because of her sublime faith that Jesus can cure them and cure her, too, if she gets the dread disease. There she kneels crying out:

“Whence His power, I know not. Some there be who call Him the Messiah. This only I know; He cureth the sick, He raiseth the dead!”

Esther drags the mother and daughter to Jesus. He touches them and cures them of the leprosy. It is a day of rejoicing. As they walk back home that evening across the city, they see three crosses looming in the sky from Calvary’s hill.

But Ben Hur has found all that he sought. He has found the Christ, he has found his mother and sister and they have been cured; and he has found Esther, to whom he says, as they look back across the city:

“O Day of Gladness! That giveth me Mother, and Sister, and Thee!”

CHAPTER V

"THE DEVIL'S DISCIPLE"

BY BERNARD SHAW

A MESSAGE OF TOLERANCE

"Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me."—Matthew 25:40.

"Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends."—John 15:13.

This is that old, old story of the idea of religion as one of hard, uncertain discipline. If one goes to a church regularly, and if one keeps the Commandments and the Law, one is religious.

In a way we feel a reminiscence of Rufe Pryor in "Hell Bent Fer Heaven," in that Mrs. Dudgeon is a female Rufe Pryor.

This Mrs. Dudgeon, according to Shaw, is a woman who believes that self-denial on her part will save her soul. But she makes her home miserable and unhappy for the children who have been raised in it, and for her husband. Everything about this home is hard, cold and Puritan.

It is between midnight and dawn of a cold wintry morning in 1777, and Mrs. Dudgeon is sitting in the kitchen of her New Hampshire home, waiting for something. The furniture is bare, and the woman is hard and mean-looking. She is a good example of that

type of woman who believes that law and not love is religion.

"So Mrs. Dudgeon, being exceedingly disagreeable, is held to be exceedingly good. Short of flat felony, she enjoys complete license except for amiable weaknesses of any sort, and is consequently, without knowing it, the most licentious woman in the parish on the strength of never having broken the Seventh Commandment, or missed a Sunday at the Presbyterian Church."

Another description of the type of religion that Mrs. Dudgeon has is in the Prologue:

"She is an elderly woman who has worked hard and got nothing by it, except dominion and detestation in her sordid home, and an unquestioned reputation for piety and respectability among her neighbors, to whom drink and debauchery are still so much more tempting than religion and rectitude, that they conceive goodness simply as self-denial."

Mrs. Dudgeon hates everybody. She hates her own son Dick, the Devil's Disciple of the play; she hates her idiot son, Christy; she hates Essie, the illegitimate daughter of Uncle Peter, her husband's brother. She hates the minister in the play; she hates the minister's wife because she has nice clothes, and culture, and because she lives in comfort with beautiful things about her. The minister's home is in vivid contrast with Mrs. Dudgeon's home. It is warm, friendly, almost luxurious, while the Dudgeon home is cold, barren, and friendless.

Act ONE

KITCHEN AND GENERAL DWELLING ROOM IN THE FARM
HOME OF MRS. DUDGEON. TIME: EARLY WINTER MORN-
ING OF 1777

Mrs. Dudgeon sits huddled over in her chair. Asleep on an old haircloth sofa is Essie. Essie's father is being hanged by the British in a town a few miles away. Poor Essie has been sent to the Dudgeon home.

Early in the morning there comes a loud knock at the door of the kitchen. Mrs. Dudgeon in a mean spirit, yells at the sleeping girl Essie to open the door, and scolds her until Essie cowers in fear. Essie is badly clothed, her bare legs showing through her ragged skirt; the picture of poverty; with hair cut short and flying from her head in a golden mass. She wins the pity of the audience at once. One's heart goes out to her. She is left alone, and she is hated.

Christy the idiot son, comes in. As he comes in he sees Essie and asks who she is.

Christy: "Who are you?"

Essie (shyly): "Essie."

Mrs. Dudgeon (sneeringly): "Oh, you may well ask." (To Essie.) "Go to your room, child, and lie down, since you haven't feeling enough to keep you awake. Your history isn't fit for your own ears to hear. Go to your room—and don't forget your prayers!"

Christy, the idiot son, attempts to defend Essie.

Christy: "Well, she can't be expected to feel Uncle Peter's death like one of the family."

Mrs. Dudgeon: "What are you talking about, child? Isn't she his daughter—the punishment of his wickedness and shame?"

Christy: "Sh! She may hear you."

Mrs. Dudgeon (raising her voice): "Let her hear me! People who fear God don't fear to give the devil's work its right name."

This woman's spirit is exactly the spirit of ten thousand people who believe that Law is religion rather than Love, Mercy, and Kindness. She hates this poor outcast, illegitimate child rather than loves her. She hates her because her father has sinned. Instead of taking her to her heart and home in pity like unto the pity of God, she hurls at her disdain and shame, and goes out of her way to hurt her; she who is already trembling with shame and pity: an outcast.

This has always been the attitude of the church toward an outcast woman; but it never was the attitude of Jesus. Jesus said, with infinite tenderness, to the woman taken in adultery: "Go and sin no more. Thy sins be forgiven thee!"

But here is a girl, a mere child, the victim of sin and not the perpetrator; a helpless child, in need of love, and she has come to a house of hate. We pity her. *Mrs. Dudgeon* sneers at her, shames her, raising her voice in that last bitter cry of accusation: "Isn't she his daughter, the punishment of his wickedness and shame?"

And then, like men and women of her bitter, cruel, unkind, unchristian type, she vindicates her own unkind attitude by insinuating that she is doing it for

the sake of her religion: "People who fear God don't fear to give the devil's work its right name."

We have a different conception of religion now. We do not fear God. It was never intended that we should fear God. When I read the responsive readings in our Scriptures, I will not use the word "fear." It does not mean "Fear." It means "Love." Ours is a Love religion and not a Fear religion. We are to love God and not to fear God. We are to love our parents and not to fear them. No parent wants a child to fear him. He wants that child's love.

I am fond of illustrating this point by an experience I had with my own mother, when I was less than nine. In a spirit of bravado I once said to her: "I'm not afraid of you!"

Said mother to me: "I don't want you to be afraid of me. I want you to love me."

From the opening of this first act, events move rapidly. Just as virtue has its own reward, so does meanness, unkindness, and hate. Christy calmly announces to his mother that his father died in the night as well as Uncle Peter. The minister comes to console the widow.

Then come the officers and the lawyer in the play to read the will of the dead father. Much to the surprise of Mrs. Dudgeon, her husband has left every cent of his money to Dick, the so-called outcast son.

Mrs. Dudgeon and the minister, Anthony Anderson, are talking about Dick Dudgeon. Mrs. Dudgeon now knows that her husband has left all of his money to Dick. The mother is angry about this. She is condemning her own son to eternal punishment.

The preacher says: "Well, Richard's earthly father has been merciful to him; and his Heavenly Judge is the Father of us all."

The scene of the reading of the will comes in this first act of the play, and Dick Dudgeon, the outcast son, is declared to be the sole heir of all his father's property and money. The preacher, his wife, and the relatives of the family are present at the reading of the will. They all scorn Dick because he has been a devil-may-care fellow, whom inevitably and immediately the audience likes. The chief accusations against him are: That he is a smuggler, that he lives with gypsies, and that he does not go to church.

But the fact that the father has left Dick all of the money makes it clear that there was something loveable and likeable about the fellow. The father took his choice between Mrs. Dudgeon and Dick, and took it in his dying moments. Death clarifies all things suddenly and surely.

In the midst of the discussion of the will, Dick suddenly asks:

Dick: "By the way, what has become of the irregular child?"

Anderson (pointing to Essie): "There, sir, listening to you."

Richard (shocked): "What? Why the devil didn't you tell me that before? Children suffer enough in this house without—" (He hurriedly crosses the room remorsefully to Essie at right.)

Richard: Come, little cousin. Never mind me; it was not meant to hurt you." (She looks up gratefully

at him. Her tear-stained face affects him violently, and he bursts out, in a fit of wrath.)

Richard: "Who has been making her cry? Who has been ill-treating her? By God—"

There has been but talk of the will up to this time. The mother, filled with hate, orders him from her house. He asks her if she is sure that it is her house until the will is read.

The will is read, and everything is left to Dick.

Essie hears Dick call for a drink of water and slips out to get it for him. She senses a friend in Dick. She comes back with a jug of water. Mrs. Dudgeon scolds her for leaving the house. Dick is impressed at the child's love for him. It is a tender scene.

When Dick finds that the house is his, he jumps to a chair and makes a speech. He declares that it shall no longer be a "House of children's tears," that "No child shall cry in it again!"

Then he makes his declaration that if Mrs. Dudgeon, his mother, represents religion; if what his own hateful and cruel mother stands for is religion—then he is the Devil's disciple; and he pledges his soul to the Devil. But it is perfectly evident that what Shaw means, and what Dick means, is that if that is religion, then he belongs to the Devil. And so would I. And so would any man or woman who knows what the tender spirit of Jesus was; the forgiving, the loving, the tolerant spirit of Jesus. Dick lived up to what Jesus set as the truest test of his discipleship: "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me."

Act TWO

LIVING ROOM IN HOUSE OF ANTHONY ANDERSON, THE
PREACHER. LATE AFTERNOON

The preacher and his beautiful wife are talking. Subconsciously, the preacher's wife, Judith, has fallen in love with Dick. She tries to pretend that she hates him; that she is not interested in him; but it is evident that he fascinates her. First of all, he has challenged her goodness in the first act; second, he has lived a life full of romance and adventure, such a contrast to her prosaic existence. Third, he has loved and helped a little outcast girl, Essie. Fourth, he is daring enough to declare himself a disciple of the Devil.

But she still has a hangover of the old Puritan school of religion, and she declares to her husband that she hates Dick. Her husband is a broad-minded Christian, and says:

Anderson: "Well, dear, let's forgive him; and then it won't matter?"

Judith: "Oh, I know it's wrong to hate anybody—but—"

Anderson (going to her with tenderness): "Come dear, you're not so wicked as you think. The worst sin toward our fellow creatures is not to hate them, but to be indifferent to them; that is the essence of inhumanity."

Then Anderson, afraid that Dick will not come as he has promised, leaves the house to find Dick. He wants to warn him that the British are going to hang him. What the preacher does not know is that it is

he who is to be the victim of the British. He is to be hanged in order to set an example to all lesser folk in that town.

The preacher goes, and leaves Dick with his wife. In the midst of tea, the British soldiers step in and take Dick, thinking he is the husband of Judith. Dick is willing to take the preacher's place. He is that type. He is not a churchman, but he is a great Christian at heart, in that he is willing to die for somebody else. He has already shown that he is a Christian in his love for the outcast girl and in that he is willing to do good unto "the least of these."

Judith is confused. She admires Dick; is on the verge of loving him; but she also loves her husband, and is weak enough to let Dick go to death in his stead.

It is necessary to fool the British, so Dick kisses her good-bye; and she is forced to allow him to kiss her. He tells her that she must not tell the preacher, that the preacher is to leave town at once to save his life; and then he goes off stage with a daring, laughing bravado—a sacrificial spirit—shouting these words after Judith:

"Good-bye, wife; good-bye, home; muffle the drums and quick march!"

"Tell your husband that I will be as steadfast in my religion as he is in his!"

In the first act we see Dick, the Devil's disciple, carrying out the spirit of a great love, the first test of real religion; the first test of a real disciple of the Master, who said: "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these, my brethren, ye have done

it unto me." Dick loves the unlovely, and that is the mark of a real disciple of Christ.

At the conclusion of this second act, we see him meeting the second test of a disciple of Christ; the willingness to die for another. For was it not Jesus Himself who said: "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends."

Act THREE

BRITISH HEADQUARTERS IN THE TOWN HALL.

MORNING

The execution is to be at noon. Judith is alone with Dick. She begs him to allow her to tell the truth and save him. He refuses. Judith thinks that her preacher husband has run away to save his own life. She so tells Dick.

Judith: "I told him everything. I expected him to come here and save you. I wanted him to come here and save you. He ran away instead!"

Richard: "That is what I meant him to do. What good would his staying have done? They'd only have hanged us both."

She tries to make him see that she loves him for his heroism. She begs him to let her tell the British the truth; that he is not her husband. He is determined to go through with it.

Richard: "If I don't go through with it, where will be the heroism of it? I shall simply have tricked them; and they'll hang me for that like a dog. Serve me right, too!"

Then Judith makes her last plea:

Judith: "I implore you—listen. You said just now that you saved him for my sake—yes—(clutching him) a little for my sake. Well, save yourself for my sake. And I will go with you to the end of the world."

He declares that he cannot accept her love; that he cannot win against the law of his own nature; that that law will not let him dodge death for another man; that he would die for any other man in town just as he is about to die for her husband.

General Burgoyne enters. The trial comes on. Judith breaks into that trial in the presence of the General and tells the truth; that Dick is not her husband. Christy comes in and tells the tribunal that Dick is his brother. Christy in his simple-minded frankness is greatly amused that they should take his outcast brother for the minister, and says:

"You pastor Anderson? (Turning to Major Swindon) Why, Mr. Anderson's a minister, a very good man; and Dick's a bar character; the respectable people won't speak to him. He's the bad brother. I'm the good one."

And yet the very statement of this half-wit, Christy, makes us understand that Dick is a good man. Somehow this half-wit is a symbol of the average judgment of the average human being as to who is good and who is bad; condemning those who are Christ-like and condoning those who are the disciples of the Devil, because they conform to all the laws of the Church.

Act FOUR

THE PRISON YARD AT NOON. THE GALLOWES IN THE
CORNER

They are ready to hang Dick.

Judith has bribed her way into the jail yard. The red-coats of the British army are lined up; the execution squad is ready. Dick leaps to the scaffold; the rope is adjusted to his neck. Judith pleads for his life. The hour of twelve is about to strike.

Just as they are ready to execute Dick, there is a roll of drums, and Anderson rushes into the yard crying, "Amen! And stop the execution! I am Anthony Anderson, the man you want."

Officers step forward to arrest him. He thrusts papers into their hands. They turn pale. They find that he is a high officer in the American Army. He is no longer a preacher. It is evident that he brings bad news to General Burgoyne; that the British have been defeated. General Burgoyne turns to Anderson and speaks:

"By the way, Mr. Anderson, I do not quite understand. The safe-conduct was for a commander of the militia. I understand you are—(He looks, as pointedly as his good manners permit, at the riding-boots, the pistols, and Richard's coat on the preacher, and adds) a clergyman?"

Anderson: "Sir, it is in the hour of trial that a man finds his true profession. This foolish young man boasted himself the Devil's disciple, but when the hour of trial came to him, he found that it was his

destiny to suffer and be faithful to the death. I thought myself a decent minister of the gospel of peace; but when the hour of trial came to me, I found that it was my destiny to be a man of action, and that my place was amid the thunder of the captains, and the shouting. So I am starting life at fifty as Captain Anthony Anderson of the Springtown militia. And the Devil's disciple here will start presently as the Reverend Richard Dudgeon."

Edwin Markham, my poet-friend, and America's great religious and social prophet, says that the heart of the gospel of Jesus is in that immortal scene where he separates the sheep from the goats, and gives as the test of a true Christian that tremendous phrase: "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me!"

Jesus Himself set a little child in their midst and said: "Of such is my Kingdom."

The Devil's disciple met this test in the manner of a true disciple of Jesus. Whoever can meet that test in this day is a true disciple of Jesus.

Mrs. Dudgeon was not a disciple of Jesus. She made people miserable. She made her house a house of tears, where little children were unhappy. Her type of religion drove her own children away from home, and made her husband hate her so much that he willed his money to Dick, the supposed outcast of the family. Her type of religion, which consisted of self-denial and keeping the law only, was the type that Jesus Himself denied and despised. Paul also said that true religion was not keeping the law, but that it was in bestowing on others love, mercy, and kindness.

Dick loved little Essie. Wherein he exemplified the spirit of Jesus.

Mrs. Dudgeon cast Essie out of her home and her heart, condemning her.

Jesus forgave and loved the adulteress. So did Dick. Dick was willing to die for another, wherein he fulfilled the final test of discipleship in the Master's Kingdom; "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friend."

In his attitude toward the weak and the helpless and the unlovely, in his attitude toward an outcast woman, in his willingness to sacrifice, Dick was a disciple of Jesus Christ, and had the spirit of Jesus, rather than being the Devil's disciple.

The whole spirit of this play, melodrama as it is, and filled with the subtle sarcasm and humour that only a Shaw can put into it, is one of the most serious utterances that he has ever made. And behind all of the humour is a biting indictment of a type of religion that is all form, all law, and keeping of the Commandments, in favor of a warm, vital, heartfelt religion which consists of "visiting the fatherless and the widows in their affliction." This is "true religion and undefiled before God and man."

CHAPTER VI

"HELL BENT FER HEAVEN"

BY THATCHER HUGHES

¹ *A MESSAGE OF INTOLERANCE*

"Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites!"
—Matthew 23:25.

Here is a perfect Scripture lesson for "Hell Bent Fer Heaven."

Rufe Pryor is a scribe and a Pharisee and a hypocrite. He is a character that we hate before the terrible drama of "Hell Bent Fer Heaven" comes to its close. He observes all of the letter of the law, but he is vile within.

A good description of a Pharisee is "The Separated One." This definition was given to this group in the days of Jesus by their opponents. The Pharisees called themselves "The Pious Ones."

They separated themselves from the so-called "Heathen" by a scrupulous adherence to the laws; at least, to the letter of the law, without paying much attention to its true spirit. They formed an organization, according to the historian Josephus; an organization of about 6,000 people. It was a close membership, secret and intolerant. All through history we have had such organizations.

But there was no group that Christ Himself de-

spised more than He despised the Pharisees; these men who claimed to be "Pious Ones," who observed the laws, but forgot the spirit of the laws. There are no more scathing denunciations or imprecations than Christ hurled at this group. He sounds like the Old Testament in these bitter imprecations against this group of intolerant bigots who set themselves up as judges of other people.

Christ says that the Pharisees bind heavy burdens on the backs of others but that they will not bear burdens themselves.

Christ says that the Pharisees like to wear religious clothes and count their beads, and like the prominent place and upper rooms.

Christ says that the Pharisees by their very un-Christ-like attitude in religious matters shut men out of the Kingdom of God.

Christ says that the Pharisees make long prayers to be heard of men, but that they devour widow's houses.

Christ says that the Pharisees pay tithes, but have no mercy, no kindness, no love, in their souls.

Christ says that the Pharisees strain at a gnat and swallow a camel.

Christ says that the Pharisees make the outside of the cup and platter clean, but that inside it is filthy and vile.

Christ says that the Pharisees are like whited sepulchres which outside are beautiful, but within are full of dead men's bones.

Christ says that the Pharisees appear righteous with-

out, but that within they are full of hypocrisy and iniquity.

Christ says that the Pharisees are vipers and serpents.

Christ never blazed forth a more terrible indictment of any class of people than He did of the Pharisees. He hated hypocrisy more than any other thing. He despised intolerance. And this organization called "The Pharisees," the organization that fostered racial hatreds, and killed brotherhood, He bombarded with His eternally righteous indignation.

Rufe Pryor was a Pharisee. This condemnation that Jesus utters, every line of it, could be applied to him. It is a terrible indictment, but it is a deserved one. And while Rufe Pryor is an extreme and an overdrawn figure in this play, yet the church is full of Rufe Pryors, and so-called religious circles are repellent with Rufe Pryors, hypocrites, those who set themselves aside and call themselves "The Pious Ones."

THE STORY OF THE PLAY ITSELF

The action takes place in the mountain home of the Hunts. It is in the Blue Ridge Mountains. A river runs just below the home. The time is four o'clock in the afternoon, and between that hour and nine o'clock that night all of the action of this play takes place on a midsummer day.

Sid Hunt is just home from the war. He is a likeable, manly fellow who is not at all worked up over the hero stuff that the papers have plastered over him. The war has not spoiled him in any way. He is just

a wholesome mountain boy who has served his country bravely in France, has come back with honours, but who is ready to go to work.

He went away in love with Jude Lowry, a mountain girl, and is also a pal and chum of her brother, Andy Lowry. While he is away at war, Rufe Pryor, a weakling in body and soul, has come into his home to do chores and to clerk in Sid's father's store.

Rufe did not go to war. He appears to be not only weak, but cowardly. But he has gotten a certain type of religion; a religion which is the religion of the Pharisee, and he despises everybody who doesn't have the type of religion that he has. He thinks that everybody who didn't get the same kind of religion that he got, and who didn't get it in the same way, is going to Hell. He is a perfect Pharisee.

As the action moves rapidly forward through three acts on that hot, murky, summer afternoon, we see that Rufe Pryor is also in love with Jude Lowry, Sid's girl.

Jude also has gotten religion.

Rufe isn't man enough to come right out with his love and call it for what it is, but he tries to insinuate that it is a spiritual affection that has nothing to do with the average human love. The audience and the author and Jude herself, recognize his protestations of spiritual love for what they are: hypocrisy.

During the action of the play, Andy Lowry comes in, and Sid and he renew their old friendship. But Andy has been drinking. Rufe Pryor gets him even drunker than he is, and then befuddles his brain with hatred for Sid. Rufe, the perfect Pharisee and hypo-

crite, would like to see Andy kill Sid and then he can have Jude. Sid alone stands between him and Jude.

He is willing to stoop to anything, even murder, though he professes to have gotten religion and to stand as one "set apart" from others.

In the movement of this drama, Rufe Pryor, whom we all despise, commits several terrible sins and crimes, and yet claims all the time to be the best Christian of them all; claims to be one to whom God talks.

First: *He commits the terrible crime of self-righteousness.*

In the first act, Rufe, in a fit of anger says :

"Thank God I'm not headed to'ard Hell like some folks!"

To which Andy replies: "Yeh, I know you claimed exemption when you j'ined the church."

This is a dig at the fact that he did not go to war, but claimed exemption. But the significant thing about this statement is the sentence which Rufe speaks:

"Thank God I'm not headed to'ard Hell like some folks!"

And in this statement is there not the faint, far-off echo of the Pharisee who thanks God that he is not as other folks are?

"Thank God we are not as other men!"

Everybody resents this type of so-called goodness, and old David offers this mild protest to Meg: "'Specially since he got that camp meetin' breed o' riligion, I never seed a man so Hell-bent fer Heaven as he is!"

Second: *He gets Andy drunk.*

To say the kindest things about it, this act of Rufe

Pryor's isn't exactly what we might call kindly and Christian. Nor do we feel that it is as we watch the way it is done. Every move of this act in dragging a fellow-man down is cowardly and terrible.

He wants to inflame poor Andy's mind against Sid, and then have him murder Sid so he can marry Jude.

He has some old whisky which he found buried in the creek bottom. He tells both Andy and Sid about this whisky, and seeing that Andy is already drinking, he coaxes him up the stairs and gives him more of it.

Every move he makes is a move inspired by hate and lust and the spirit of envy and murder. Finally he gets Andy drunk.

Third: *He revives an old feud.*

He insinuatingly reminds this poor drunken man that there were six more Lowrys killed in the feud than Hunts. With a despicable, sly, sneaking insinuation, this so-called Christian, this man who is intolerant of everybody's religion but his own; this man who feels that God always talks to him directly, says:

Rufe: "I ain't a-sayin' who it was. But as your friend, Andy, I'm a-goin' to warn you o' one thing; don't you start nothin' with Sid that you ain't prepared to end! Rickollict the last time the Hunts and Lowrys fit they 'uz three more Lowrys killed 'n they 'uz Hunts!

Andy: "Did Sid brag about that?"

Rufe: "I ain't a-sayin' what Sid done! I'm a-talkin' to you now as a friend fer your own good!"

Andy: "Three more Lowrys 'n Hunts!" (Weeping with rage.) "The dirty skunk! Where is he? Where is he?"

Rufe: "Ca'm yourself, Andy! He'll be back here any minit."

Andy: "Rufe, are you fer me or agin me?"

Rufe: "I'll stick by a friend, Andy, tell Judgment Day!"

Andy: "Then gimme yer hand! Fer jist as shore as sunrise I'm a-goin' to equalize things!"

Rufe: "I'm sorry to hear you talk that way, Andy!"

Andy: (Pulls out pistol.) "You believe in Providence, don't you, Rufe?"

Rufe: "Yes—I—believe in Providence."

Andy: "Look! It's a-goin' to take six Hunts to make things equal, an' I got jist six catridges in my pistol! That's Provydence! This is a free country an' everybody in it ought ter be equal. Three more Lowrys 'n Hunts—That ain't equal!"

Fourth: *Rufe sins against Love.*

All the while he is poisoning poor drunk Andy against his best friend, this hypocrite is also trying to poison Jude, the mountain girl, against Sid. He insinuates to her that Sid has not been true to her in France; that he has been free with the French girls; that he will taint the Hunt blood if Jude marries him.

He also does worse than that in his sin against Love, for he tries to impose upon Jude's religious emotions to get her to marry him. He tries to make her believe that his love for her is ordained of God. He tells her that the first time he ever thought of marrying her was one day in church when he was converted, that something spiritual forced him to look across at the women's side of the church, a thing that he had never done before.

Rufe: "The first time I ever thought of marryin' you, Jude, 'us when I seen you in church the day I got religion!"

Jude: "Mebby you wouldn't a thought of it then if you'd been a-studyin' 'bout your religion like you'd ought ha' been!"

Rufe: "I wuz, Jude! That's jist the pint! The whole thing was spiritual!"

He knows that Jude loves Sid, and yet for his own selfish purposes, he is willing to have Sid killed, to reawaken an old mountain feud which has been slumbering for fifty years, and bring untold unhappiness to the girl he wants. That is the Pharisee in action. He professes much, but he has no mercy in his soul. He is a literalist. He observes the word of the law but its spirit he does not know!

Fifth: He commits murder in his heart.

The action moves swiftly to murder. This is the inevitable end of intolerance, for the first fruits of intolerance are hate, and hate breeds murder in the long run.

Sid and Andy ride out alone. Sid falls from his horse and reaches into his pocket for a handkerchief. Andy's brain, inflamed by alcohol, but more inflamed by Rufe's suggestions and insinuations, sees a menace in that movement, and he shoots at him. The bullet grazes Sid's head, goes through his hat, and Sid runs.

The family, back in the dark room of the cabin, hear the shot and are terror-stricken, for they are beginning to see the whole sinister awakening of the old feud in the mind of drunken Andy.

The mother sinks into a chair. Jude thinks that her own brother has shot her lover Sid, and swears that if he has, she herself will revenge the murder. All the while Rufe, the religious, the pious, the hypocrite, the sneaking Pharisee, knows the truth; knows that it is he who has brought about this murder—or what they think is murder.

The family, terror-stricken, go out to search for Sid. All except Rufe, who is left alone. Then Sid himself steps in and Rufe turns white. Sid is not dead, after all.

Sid asks where the rest have gone, and Rufe tells him they have gone to look for him. Sid knows that the river is rising, and that they must be stopped. He thinks of a telephone that is under the dam they are building in the river. He tells Rufe he will go there and telephone to stop the rest of them from hunting Andy.

Left alone again, Rufe drops to his knees and prays. He has a vision; just the type of a vision that we would expect from this type of a mind. He assumes that the desires of his own black heart are God's desires; that God is suggesting to him that he is to set off a charge of dynamite in the dam and drown Sid. There is a hysterical scene, and Rufe goes out to set the fuse and the charge of dynamite.

Just before Sid goes out, he realizes that this miserable cur is at the bottom of all this unhappiness; at the bottom of Andy's madness; that Rufe has gotten Andy drunk and then planted the seeds of hate over the old feud in his befuddled mind.

Sid: "So I'm right! You wuz at the bottom of it. Did you do it a-purpose?"

Rufe: "God forgive you, Sid, fer such a thought!"

Sid: "An' God damn you!" (Hurls Rufe to the floor.)

Sid rushes out. Thunder crashes and lightning flashes. Then Rufe, suddenly struck with an idea, rises to his knees.

Rufe: "Did you hear what he said, God? I can put up with his insults to me, but when it comes to blaspheming thy holy name it does look like its time to call a halt! But you know what you're a-doin', Lord, 'n I don't! I'm only a ignorant sinner! You know more in a minnit 'n I could in a million years!"

He gets a vision that he must slay Sid as blasphemers were slain in the olden days. He drops to his knees again in centre stage, trembling.

Rufe: "I'd rather you'd do it, yourself, Lord. You can do it better'n me. And it'd have more effect! But I ain't no coward! I'll do it fer you, Lord! You died fer me once, and I'm willin' to die fer you if you want me to! If it's your will that this blasphemer die, I've got a whole box o' dynamite out thar in the store, and a time fuse long enough so's I can git back here afore it explodes! I can blow up the dam while he's under thar telephonin' and the waters o' your wrath'll sweep down over him like they did over Pharaoh and his hosts in olden times!"

There is a blinding flash of lightning and a terrific

crash of thunder. Then Rufe's face lights up and he leaps to his feet confirmed.

"I hear you, Lord! An' like Joshua of old, I go to do your will!"

In the last act the spirit of murder runs rampant in Rufe's heart. The dam bursts and he thinks that he has rid himself of Sid. In the meantime they bring Andy in and tie him to a chair. They think that Andy has carried out his threat and shot Sid. They do not know that Sid has gone to hunt them. Rufe does not tell them. But they decide to wait before killing Andy, in hopes that Sid is still alive. Andy says that he tried to kill Sid, but missed him.

They decide to put Andy in the cellar. They leave him in charge of Rufe. Rufe knows that the river is rising and that Andy will be drowned in the cellar. That will rid him of both Sid and Andy.

Sixth: Rufe accuses God.

Then Sid walks in. He has swum to shore after the explosion. He is now convinced that Rufe is at the bottom of everything; his treachery; his intolerance; his lust; his hatred.

Then Rufe sees what he thinks is Sid's ghost, who has come back to haunt him, and he recoils in terror.

Rufe: "I didn't do it! I swear I didn't!"

Sid: "If you didn't, who did? I'm a-goin' to h'ant you till I find out."

Rufe: "Then I'll tell you who done it! It 'uz Him—up yonder!"

Sid: "God?"

Rufe: "Yeh!"

Phariseeism, hypocrisy, literalism, fundamentalism—have all come to their inevitable conclusions—hate and murder.

Intolerance is always a breeder of hate, and hate leads to murder. The deed may not actually occur, but if there is murder in the heart, the sin or murder has been committed. Rufe tried to kill both Andy and Sid. He tried twice to kill Sid. He did not succeed, but there was murder in his heart. And he justified himself in it. He might have said in his soul, "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus!"

He was of the type that hated his fellow-man if that fellow-man did not worship as he worshipped. He was of that type whose religion, instead of making him love his fellow-man, made him feel superior to them. If they did not believe as he did, he hated them instead of loving them.

There are too many Rufes in the church itself. Some of them are Rufes in a milder form. They murder with their tongues. They murder reputations. They fling the dart of bitterness into human souls; they thrust the sword of hate. They shoot the arrows of gossip into the air and into human hearts. They have murder in their souls without the actual courage to commit the deed itself. They even get to the place where they fool themselves into thinking they do it in the name of God and Heaven and Jesus Christ.

In a recent chapter on Tolerance, Dr. Fosdick sums up the results of Intolerance in these phrases:

1. That it was bred in the war. "Tolerance of independent opinion is no virtue in war time. Propaganda

unified the nation's mind, and every one who dares to differ is an outcast."

2. "By intolerance of other people and their opinions, men protect in comfort their sense of superiority; they save themselves from open-mindedness and from the consequent, painful necessity of changing their ways of thought and life."

3. "Intolerance is not a sign of a strong, but of a weak faith. It is the man who is sure of his wife who is free from jealousy, and it is the man who is certain of his truth who can afford to be courteous to rival opinions. When will the churches learn that intolerance, whether personal or ecclesiastical, is an evidence of weakness? The confident can afford to be calm and kindly; only the fearful must defame and exclude."

4. "Intolerance is, therefore, one of the greatest failures of history. Intolerance weakens both individuals and institutions."

I go back to the beginning of this sermon. It has three sections:

The first of the story is how Jesus hated the Pharisee, the intolerant. No group of people brought forth such terrific indictments from the lips of Jesus. The twenty-third chapter of Matthew burns and flashes with the thunder-bolts of his indignation against them.

The second section of this sermon is the story of the intolerance and hypocrisy of Rufe Pryor, and that great play, "Hell Bent Fer Heaven," shows the gradual psychological processes of intolerance and fundamentalism from selfishness to hate and murder!

The third section of this sermon in which I quote

from a recent book on intolerance, shows that intolerance is weakness, it is ineffective, it is irreligious.

"Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites!"

There is only one answer to the whole spirit of this sermon and this play. And, curiously enough, this great new Commandment came shortly after Christ's terrific indictment of intolerance and the Pharisee.

"This is my commandment, That ye love one another!"

Moses gave Ten Commandments; Jesus gave one. The one commandment of Jesus summed them all up: "That ye love one another!"

Love casteth out all fears, all hates, all hurts, all murder, all hypocrisy! Love is life. Hate is death!

CHAPTER VII

"THE PASSING OF THE THIRD FLOOR BACK"

BY JEROME K. JEROME

THE STORY OF CHRIST IN A BOARDING-HOUSE

"And they told him, that Jesus of Nazareth passeth by."—Luke 18:37.

The play is the story of the passing of Jesus in human form.

"The Stranger" is a Christ-Man in everyday life.

He comes into a distracted, selfish group of people in a London boarding-house, finds them mean, suspicious, quarrelling, hating each other; full of intrigue, sin, suffering; and he changes their lives.

It is a beautiful picture of what Christ can do, through a Christ-like human being, and through Christ-like human service for other human beings.

It reminds us once again of the saying of Dan Crawford about Livingstone: "Stanley knew there was a Christ because there was a Livingstone." So this group of men and women knew there was a Christ because there was a Christ-like stranger who came among them.

The passing also reminds us of that beautiful story "Salome," written by Burris Jenkins; that story which

shows how various types of Biblical characters—Shaoul, who became Paul; Stephanus, who became Stephen, Elezar who became Lazarus; Maria who became Mary—all were transformed by their contacts with Jesus. So in modern life this “Passing of the Third Floor Back” does the same thing.

The play is divided into three parts, like the immortal Gaul; the Prologue, the play itself, and the Epilogue.

In the Prologue there are twelve characters: A Satyr, A Coward, A Bully, A Shrew, A Hussy, A Rogue, A Cad, A Snob, A Slut, A Cheat, and A Passer-by. The characters in this Prologue represent the types of human life which need Jesus.

We all find ourselves, or some part of ourselves, in and among these characters. We are all of us partly at least, a bit of a coward, bully, cheat, hussy, rogue, snob, cad, or slut.

FOUR CHARACTERS THAT STAND OUT TRANSFORMED

I cannot take all twelve of the characters of this play and show their transformation, but I will take four of them, because they rather typify a cross-section of human life. In addition to these four characters, I want to take a rather average human home of modern days, which is represented in this play. Four characters and a home, transformed by the passing of a Christ-like man; that is glory enough for one sermon!

MRS. SHARPE, THE STINGY LANDLADY

The play opens on a dining-room, filled with horse-hair furniture, with a big, round dining-room table

in the centre, with windows looking out on a busy London street, and red curtains covering these windows. Against the wall at the back we see an upright piano and a sideboard. To the right of the audience large folding doors lead into the living-room. There is a fireplace with a dull red glow.

Mrs. Sharpe is sitting at a table making out bills, and scolding Stasia her maid. Stasia has come from a Reformatory, and Mrs. Sharpe's first evidence of littleness and unkindness is that she is always throwing this fact up to Stasia, and threatening to throw her out into the street. She is paying her starvation wages because of this fact. Indeed, she had hired a girl with a Reformatory record because she could get her cheaper.

The second revelation of the character of this bitter-tongued woman is her trick of filling the whisky decanter with cold tea, putting a little soda in it to make it have a tang to its taste, cheating the old drunken Major Tompkins when he comes in at night in a drunken condition and wanting more whisky, for which he pays.

A third but simple indication of her stinginess is the care with which she watches the candles that the guests burn, and marks them with a nick in the grease to check up on how far they are burnt in a single night. Another evidence is a sneaking way she has of putting water into the milk which she serves her guests.

There is a single room left in that boarding-house. It is on "The Third Floor Back." The landlady has not been able to rent it for weeks. The maid knows

this. It is a cheap, cold little room, not fit for an animal to live in. But Stasia puts a card in the window and "The Stranger" wanders into the boarding-house.

There is a knocking at the door as Stasia the maid and the landlady, Mrs. Sharpe, quarrel with each other over the making up of the table for the evening meal.

The stranger comes in, with a slightly stooping figure, and somewhat shabby. One cannot guess his age, but "There are moments when the deep eyes would seem to speak of many sorrows. But more often—and always when he smiles—it is a face radiant with youth. In some mysterious way he brings into that room with him an atmosphere of dignity. His very bow to Mrs. Sharpe as he enters, is the simplest of courtesies, but Mrs. Sharpe, returning the bow, becomes, for the moment, a lady."

Poverty, simplicity, sorrow, dignity, courtesy, youth, are all in the carriage and the demeanour of "The Stranger."

His entrance into that room changes its atmosphere.

Some bigoted preacher said that Emerson would go to Hell. A wiser man said, "If he does he will change the climate of Hell, and immigration will start in that direction."

The very gentleness of "The Stranger" breaks down the shrewd, calculating soul of Mrs. Sharpe. They talk about what the little room will cost him if he remains.

Mrs. Sharpe (bowing again): "I usually ask two pounds ten a week. To you,—seeing you are a traveller—we'll say two pounds."

This is twice as much as the room is worth, but even

this early the influence of the gentle Christ-like man is being felt. The stranger protests. It is not enough. In her generosity she is cheating herself.

The Stranger: "To you that is not fair. I am not a rich man, as you, with your quick woman's sympathy, have divined. But I have sufficient. I can afford to pay you your proper price."

There is a touch of indescribable humour here, for the stranger and the landlady argue over the price of that room; the landlady refusing to take two pounds ten, and insisting that it be one pound ten; and the stranger insisting that she is being too generous; and his very assumption that she is generous, instead of the sharp, stingy old woman that she is, breeds generosity in her soul, much to the astonishment of Stasia the maid, who stands by, thinking that Mrs. Sharpe has gone crazy.

Mrs. Sharpe: "When I said two pounds ten, I was thinking of some other room. It should have been one pound ten."

The Stranger: "Then I decline to take it. The two pounds I can well afford."

Mrs. Sharpe: "One pound ten are my terms. If you are bent on paying more, you can go elsewhere. You'll find plenty to oblige you."

The Stranger (he looks at her): "Women are so willful. (Smiling) And you kind women are the worst of all." (He has taken her hand, and she laughs.)

Stasia has gone out of the room, and returns just after the stranger has softened Mrs. Sharpe's heart.

Mrs. Sharpe starts as Stasia enters, walks over to the pale child, looks down at her little wan face; a feeling of pity and gentleness steals over her heart, and she says:

Mrs. Sharpe: "Like to put on your hat—get a breath of fresh air before dinner?"

Stasia (stares): "D'ye mean it?"

Mrs. Sharpe (takes the napkin quietly from her): "I'll finish laying the table. Don't be long."

Stasia: (She is off half way to the door and something suddenly stops her.) "Sure you can spare me?"

Mrs. Sharpe: "That'll be all right."

Stasia: "I won't be long." (Runs swiftly out.)

She is overwhelmed with surprise. That is the first gentle word that this sharp-tongued, mean-spirited, stealing, cheating woman has spoken since Stasia came from the Reformatory to be her help. She is utterly bewildered at that gentle something which has suddenly come over Mrs. Sharpe. What she did not know—but what the audience sees in the closing moments of the Epilogue, is Mrs. Sharpe standing in the dining-room, lost in amazement and wonder at herself; with a dreamy, far-away look in her eyes, as if some strange transformation has come over her.

She goes on folding the napkins. Then she, too, forgets them. They fall from her hand. A smile gradually breaks over the old, hard face, strangely altering it. Then she remembers what the stranger said, and whispers the words over to herself:

"And you kind women are the worst of all." And

her upturned face becomes transformed with a great tenderness toward all things.

HARRY LARCOM AND HIS TRANSFORMATION

Harry Larcom is a careless boy, with a human touch that we all like the minute we see him. He is sitting at the piano, playing. He has a secret desire to be a great actor, but nobody in the boarding-house has any sympathy with his ambitions. He has almost lost hope of the consummation of his desire, because he has never found anybody who believes in him; who has expectations of him.

Most of the boarders are sitting about the room. They have sized up the stranger as a mountebank. He is beneath them. They resent him. But he has a strange faculty for finding the good in people about him. He seems to love everybody, and to be always trying to probe deep into their hearts and find the good that is in them; the talent; the hope for them. He speaks as Harry Larcom sits rattling away at the piano:

The Stranger: "How well you play!"

Larcom (swinging suddenly round on his stool): "Hullo! You there, old cockerlor—(He encounters the stranger's eyes. Somehow they put him out of countenance.) Think so?"

The Stranger: "You have the touch of one who loves music."

Larcom cannot believe that any man on earth can be in earnest when he speaks that way, and he misunderstands the stranger. He must be after something. God pity the soul who meets kindness with that spirit.

That soul is near to death. That is a characteristic of our age; when we encounter a great man of public service; a doer of kindly deeds; a follower of Jesus; the first question we ask is: "What is he after? What is he getting out of it?" God pity our dead souls! So Larcom turned.

Larcom (rises, grins up into the stranger's face): "What's the little game? Want to borrow money?"

The Stranger: "You see, it would be of no use. You see through me at once."

Then they talk. Larcom tells of his ambitions; he tells of how he hates to play cheap music, but that the crowd in the boarding-house has to have some amusement.

Larcom: "Oh well, somebody's got to do something to liven things up a bit."

The Stranger: "Ah, yes! (Puts a hand on the lad's shoulder.) Some kind, good-natured body. You do it just because you are a good fellow. You will have them all around you, laughing. Wherever you are life will be a little brighter; dull, tired faces shall be made to smile. You give them so much more than money. You give them—yourself—you are really a philanthropist!"

The great expectation that this stranger has in this young lad arouses all the best that is in him. He thought that he was a low comedian. He thought that he was ill-natured. When the stranger talked about his doing such a thing as amusing the boarding-house crowd, he protested that he only did things for money—that he was no philanthropist—but the stranger

made him see the best that was in himself. He asked that he might hear the young musician play some of his own compositions. There was a warming of hearts, a stirring of the depths in that boy's soul. The stranger referred to him as "You artists." The stranger rises to go. Larcom rises with him, a warm feeling of comradeship fills his heart, the tears start in his eyes, this hard boy of the world, and he says:

Larcom: "Good night, in case I don't see you again —(holds out his hand) partner!"

STASIA THE MARY MAGDALENE TRANSFORMED

Stasia is the Mary Magdalene of the play. As I have suggested, she was taken from a Reformatory because she was cheap help. Before "The Stranger" came, Mrs. Sharpe was always holding her past over her head like a great club. It was a cruel life to live. But the stranger changed all this and softened Mrs. Sharpe's heart as we have seen.

When the play opens, we see that Stasia is on the verge of an assignation with Larcom. He is promising her a set of cheap beads if she cares to knock on his door at ten o'clock to get them. It is a sordid bartering, but in Stasia's bitter young life of trouble and crime it means little. I say little—but it does mean something. That is the hope of it. Like Mary Magdalene in the Edgar Saltus play: "Dead—Oh, Christ—and yet I am not wholly dead! No, Christ, not wholly dead!"

When the stranger, the Christ-like man, comes into the boarding-house, he changes Stasia's life just as he

changes the life of all of them. In fact, he seems to love poor little child-like Stasia more than any of them. Perhaps it was because she needed him more. "She hath sinned much!" he might have said, like Christ his prototype, "but she hath loved much. Therefore her sins are forgiven her!"

The Stranger has hardly gotten in touch with Stasia before he begins to see in her something hidden, something buried; a lady, that she herself never dreamed was there. The Stranger is always having "Great Expectations" about people. And he had about Stasia.

When the Stranger comes into the boarding-house, Stasia becomes repugnant to herself. She begins to feel the filth of the old life. She cries out to Mrs. Sharpe one day in a fit of remorse:

Stasia: "We're all thieves, you know, you and me. What's the good of us all, that's what I want to know? What's the good of us?"

Mrs. Sharpe: (Repeating helplessly) "What's the good of us?"

Stasia: (She has put down the tray which she had at first taken up. She comes and faces Mrs. Sharpe) "What's the use of us? What is the use of us? What's the good of us to ourselves or to anybody else?"

Then came the Stranger. Stasia has just accepted the glass ear-rings. She comes into the room where the Stranger stands.

The Stranger: "You are gaily adorned."

Stasia (puzzled at first, then understanding): "What, these? They ain't mine—not exactly—not yet. Just put them on to see 'ow they suited me."

The Stranger: "They are not good enough for you."

Stasia: "Of course they're not real. I know that. But they're rather effective, don't you think? (She looks up at him with her serious, childish eyes.)

The Stranger: "They do not become you. They are not pure."

Stasia: "You're making fun o' me. (Tears are in her voice.) 'Ow can I be anyone? I was born in a work-house."

The Stranger (after a moment's silence): "A King once was born in a stable!"

Stasia walks over to the fire and one by one takes the glass ear-rings from her ears, and deliberately throws them into the fire. She looks up into the face of the Stranger, her childish eyes filled with love.

Stasia: "I didn't know. Good night."

VIVIAN, WHO IS ABOUT TO SELL HERSELF TO AN OLD
MAN, IS REDEEMED ALSO

Vivian is the daughter of Major and Mrs. Tompkins. Major Tompkins is a relic of a soldier gentleman of other days. He is a bluffer. He is in debt. He has sold his soul for financial help. He owes Mrs. Sharpe two hundred pounds at the beginning of the play. He has given his note. Mrs. Sharpe threatens to put the whole family out.

Major Tompkins is trying to marry off his beautiful daughter Vivian to a licentious old man named Wright in order to recoup his fortunes. Vivian doesn't seem to have the moral courage to resist this bargain of her body and her soul; that is, before the Stranger comes.

Vivian: "Of course, there is the possibility that in some moment of self-respect I may be tempted to tell him how the mere touch of him is loathsome to me."

Stasia tells Vivian about the stranger who came.

Vivian: "Oh, is there a new lodger?"

Stasia: "Came this evening, just before dinner."
(There is something in Stasia's voice that causes Vivian to glance around at her.)

Vivian: "What is he like?"

Stasia (coming up to Vivian): "This ain't all the world, is it?"

Vivian: "What do you mean?"

Stasia: "Us sort. All a-lyin' and a-cheatin' and a-snarlin'—despising one another—and ourselves! Ain't there something else?"

Silence for a time. . . .

Vivian: "Yes. There are sweet thoughts, and fine feelings, and self-respect. But such things, Stasia, are only for rich folk."

Vivian has given up in despair; succumbed to what seems the inevitable. She will sell her body for the sake of relieving the poverty of her father and mother. It has been decided. But then the Christ comes into her life. Her type of assignation is only a little more refined than Stasia's proposed meeting with Larcom.

Vivian really loves a young artist named Christopher. But she will not marry him because he is not making money. He is not making money because he will not cheapen his art. He still has ideals.

Vivian has decided to marry Wright, the old man of wealth. In fact, she has decided to go to the theatre with him the night the Stranger comes. She stands with her coat thrown over her shoulders. She is about to go out. The Stranger steps into the room. As Vivian turns to go out with Wright, the Stranger stands before her. The quiet eyes are fixed on her, those eyes that seem to have seen all the sorrow of the world, great and little. The cloak falls from her shoulders to the floor about her feet. Just before the Stranger entered, Larcom, in a moment of hilarity, with a sneer in his music, started playing Mendelssohn's Wedding March. The Major, her father, was beating time with his hands. There is a terrible note of derision of a horrible bargain of body in it all. That quiets suddenly. A silence falls as the Stranger looks into Vivian's eyes, and the cloak falls from her shoulders.

Mrs. Tompkins (who sees Vivian standing rooted to the spot): "What's the matter?"

Vivian (turning her eyes upon her mother): "I am sorry. I cannot—I shall not be able to go out to-night!"

The others leave Vivian and the Stranger together. Vivian walks over to the hearth and kneels before the fire.

Vivian: "Who are you? Why do you follow me? I see you in the streets. You look at me out of the crowds. Why have you come here? What is it that you want with me, anyhow?"

The Stranger: "To plead with you—will you listen? For one who loves you?"

Vivian: "But who are you? I know your voice. I

hear it in the winds. I hear it in the silence of the night—who—who—who—are you?"

She is standing with her face illumined by the fire, looking at him. There comes a strange awe into her eyes, into her voice. With a cry, she speaks:

Vivian: "You—are—the—Christ?"

The Stranger: "I am a fellow-lodger!"

"And they told him, that Jesus of Nazareth passeth by."

The world will never be the same after the passing of Jesus of Nazareth.

There are others who are redeemed in this play. There is Christopher, the artist, who is about to sell his art for a mess of pottage; who is about to paint filthy nudes for a Jew; but Jesus comes and says to the young artist: "Are not all men and women beautiful?"

Christopher: "Ah! I must have been thinking of him—my Teacher. They were his very words—my master, who taught me. 'Ugliness' he would say, 'is but skin deep. The business of Art is to reveal the beauty underlying all things.' Your voice reminds me of him."

There was the painted, bedaubed Miss Kite, who thought she was old at forty; who thought that adventure and romance had fled from life and that she must find a substitute for Beauty, Romance, Adventure—until she met the Stranger—the Christ.

Miss Kite: "Well, I'm—(struggles, but the Stranger's eyes insist upon the truth) I'm forty. You don't call that young, do you?"

The Stranger: "Young enough not to have forgotten the thoughts of youth; old enough to have learned pity. Forty? Why, that is a beautiful age."

Someone has said of Jesus that although he left little behind, "He took men out of Time and made them feel Eternal!"

Forty is not old with Jesus. It is the prime of life. No age is old with Jesus: "Why, that is a beautiful age!" When Jesus passes by and touches a human life, He cures it of all its infirmities; its age; and He leaves Youth behind.

Have you grown old before your time? Have you reached forty, fifty, seventy? There is no Age. There is only Youth.

On New Year's Eve at our Watch Night Service, a woman of ninety-seven marched up the stairs in the processional carrying her candle and singing: "We're Marching to Zion," and in that service was a little four-year-old baby. But in Jesus there is no Old Age. Jesus is Youth. Jesus is Life. Jesus is Romance and Adventure!

Jesus even saved the Major and his wife from a bickering life of quarrelling. He saved a home. He will always save a home from unhappiness. He has saved individuals. We have seen that. He has saved a whole boarding-house. We have seen that in this beautiful play. He will also save a whole nation and a whole world if we give Him a chance.

It was the joke of the boarding-house that Major Tompkins and his wife fought like the proverbial "cats and dogs." It is a boarding-house joke that they are called "Darby and Joan" in sarcasm.

The Stranger saves them to happiness by calling back old memories of the days of romance and beauty and love. He brings it all back by suggestion. He claims to have known Mrs. Tompkins when she was a girl.

The Stranger: "The evening I first met her! (The Major glances swiftly.) By the stepping-stones! It was hawthorn time, you remember? Could any vision have been sweeter?"

The Major: "Yes, yes, she was a dainty little piece of goods in those days!"

The Stranger suggests that he was an old sweetheart and arouses in the Major's breast the old fires of jealousy and pride. The Stranger even brings back to the old Major the days when he was a gallant soldier and famed for his courtesy—when the women loved him on sight. He swells with pride. Instead of Vivian going to the theatre with Mr. Wright, the Stranger's presence not only saves Vivian from that, but softens the heart of the old man, and he offers the tickets to Major Tompkins and his wife. The old Major hurries off for his wife's coat. He has not done that in years. It is a little gallantry that he has forgotten and that comes awkwardly. He has also remembered her smelling-salts, much to her amazement.

In the Epilogue to the play, the Stranger talks to the Major about the new happiness in their home. The Major is saying that it was all along *his* fault.

The Major: "My fault, sir, my fault!"

The Stranger (smiling): "It is always *our* fault!"

The Major: (He laughs, with a glance toward his

wife.) "Children, sir—that's all they are, just children. (Confidentially) Maybe sometimes a little trying. A gentleman should always remember to be gentle with them."

Later the Stranger is talking with Mrs. Tompkins. She is telling him how happy their home is since he came and made them see each other as they were, and brought back to them the old romance of memory.

Mrs. Tompkins: "We women forget that it is our privilege to be the 'better half'—the more forbearing. You men are such good creatures—(laughs) if only we remember you are nothing more than just big boys!"

Time passes, the Stranger leaves a message to all the boarders, to Major Tompkins and his wife, to Vivian, to Stasia, to Mrs. Sharpe. He leaves this message through Christopher and Vivian, who have redeemed themselves.

Christopher (holding out his hand): "Good-bye, sir. I am glad you came into this house. I cannot tell you all you have done for me. It would not sound much—in words. I wish there was something we could do for you in return!"

The Stranger: "You would? (He is between them, and lays a hand on each.) It will seem so easy. But there will come days when the memory of a promise made to a friend may help. You will give me, as a gift, this promise: that through all things, to the end, you love one another."

The Stranger passes out and as he goes he speaks:

The Stranger (holding out his hand): "As friends, at eventide, we will merely say Good Night."

Stasia sees the Stranger last. She walks to the door with him.

Stasia: "It still keeps foggy, doesn't it?"

The Stranger: "I see blue skies and sunshine."

The Stranger passes out into the fog. Stasia turns back into the room. She leaves the door open. As she turns, a shaft of sunlight falls across the floor. Turning she sees it. She goes to it. With her arms outstretched on each side of her, the light pouring on her face, kissing her parted lips, she walks out of the room.

"And the face that passes out is the face of one to whom Love has spoken."

CHAPTER VIII

"THE SERVANT IN THE HOUSE"

BY CHARLES RAND KENNEDY

A MESSAGE OF CHRIST SERVING AND SAVING

"He that saith he is in the light, and hateth his brother, is in darkness even until now."—I John 2:9.

These dramas of Christ are really sermons.

The men who wrote them are preachers. They intended to be.

They all take texts and print these texts in their books.

All hail these new preachers to our ranks of the ministry. We need them. They are a valuable asset to us. Let every preacher who cares to advance his gospel bid them welcome. Let every preacher who cares to fascinate his audiences anew, with a new touch of variety, use these great Drama Sermons in his pulpit.

Charles Rand Kennedy, the author of this strikingly spiritual play in addition to the above text, quotes as a foreword to his drama two lines from George Frederick Watts:

"The hunger for brotherhood is at the bottom of the unrest of the modern civilized world."

Act One

The curtain opens on two simple rooms. The front room is a breakfast room, in a vicarage in England. It has high beams of dark wood. There is a table set. Through a door at the back the audience can see another room which is a library. In between, the audience can see the walls of a Cathedral, and piles of dirt and brick and stone. It is evident that some repairing is going on. The stage setting does not change during the entire play.

As the curtain rises, a servant boy, named Rogers, and Manson are setting the table for breakfast.

Manson is dressed in long flowing white robes. He has just come from India. He looks like Christ. He is intended to look like Christ, for like the hero in "The Passing of the Third Floor Back," Manson is Christ in the guise of a "servant in the house."

The Vicar is expecting his brother, the Bishop of Benares, for a visit. The Bishop of Benares is a famous builder of cathedrals.

Manson is that Bishop in disguise, as the audience soon learns. The brothers of the Vicar are two. One is the Bishop of Benares, the other is a drunken out-cast named Robert. The Vicar has seen neither of them for so long that he has forgotten what each looked like.

One of these brothers, Manson, is in the dining room of the Vicar's own home when he comes down for breakfast.

The Vicar exchanges greeting with the new servant,

and after a while is curious to know what his religion is.

The Vicar: "My old friend in Brindisi, who recommended you, writes that you bore a very excellent character with your late employer in India; but there was one matter he didn't mention—no doubt you will recognize its importance in a clergyman's family—he never mentioned your religion."

Manson: "I can soon remedy that, sir. My religion is very simple, I love God and all my brothers."

The Vicar (after a pause): "God and your brothers—"

Manson: "Yes sir; *all* of them."

This sentence is emphasized in the dialogue because a little later the development in the play is to show that Robert, the outcast brother of the Vicar—and incidentally, the brother of Manson—has been thrown over by the Vicar because he drinks. The Vicar has not tried to help that brother because he fears what the presence of that brother may do to his standing in the Vicarage. He feels conscience-stricken for this neglect, and is startled when Manson emphasizes that line: "Yes sir; *all* of them."

In addition to this injustice of his own blood-brother, he has done another cruel thing, and that is, he has taken Mary, the child of his outcast brother, into his home; and has, with the connivance of his wife, alienated her affections from her own father. These two sins hurt his peace of mind.

It has been the habit of the church to love just a limited few. The church is rather inclined to love the

well-dressed, the respectable, the gentle; and to leave the poor, the ill-dressed, the drunkards, the thieves, and the adulteresses outside the pale of the church. "No drunkards need apply" seems to be the invisible sign on the doors of the average church. And this, in spite of the fact that Jesus lived almost wholly with outcasts and sinners.

Somebody has said that no Christian man or woman has any right to desire for his or her own child anything that they do not just as strongly desire for every child on the earth.

There is a biting little quatrain which reads:

"The golf links lie so near the mill
That almost every day
The working children can look out
And see the men at play."

Manson was not only saying a thing that startled his own brother, the Vicar—who did not know that Manson was his brother—but in that single sentence he was indicting us, the church, its preachers, and its members; we who refuse to welcome the prophets of the social gospel; we who sit in our complacent ease and care nothing for the sufferings of our fellow-men. It is a sentence that ought to shake our souls awake to living the full gospel:

"My religion is very simple. I love God and *all* my brothers!"

The act moves on with rapidity, and Mary, a boyish, beautiful girl, leaps into the breakfast room. She has heard that the new servant was coming. She sees his strange dress and shouts out:

Mary: "Good morning. I suppose you're Manson? I must say you look simply ripping. How do you do? My name's Mary." (She offers him her hand.)
Manson (kissing it): "A very dear name, too!"

The Vicar is embarrassed by Mary's instincts, and her approach to the new servant, but with that keenness of Youth's instincts, added to a woman's intuition, Mary knows and feels something strangely beautiful and unusual about the very presence of Manson. In fact, she is startled, and a minute later, when they are left alone on the stage, with half-frightened, breathless sort of exclamation, she speaks:

Mary: "Who are you?"

Manson: "I am—(The Cathedral bells ring) I am The Servant in the House. I have my work to do. Would you like to help me?"

Mary: "What shall I do?"

Manson: "Help to spin the Fairy Tale. Will you?"

Mary: "I will!"

Manson: "Then keep the secret. Remember! And wish hard!"

Mary: "Do you believe in wishing?"

Manson: "Everything comes true, if you wish hard enough."

Thank God for that phrase: "Everything comes true if you wish hard enough." It does in this play. Mary wishes for her father more than anything else in the world. The Vicar wishes that he might break loose from the selfish influences of his wife. Manson wishes that he may redeem that Vicarage and make it Christian.

"Everything comes true, if you wish hard enough!"

That is a good philosophy of life. We do just about what we want to do. We get just about what we want to get in life, if we wish hard enough.

The next character who steps into the dining room comes with a loud ringing of the doorbell. They are expecting the Bishop of Lancashire, who is the brother of the Vicar's wife. He is a selfish, materialistic churchman. Manson thinks that ringing can be no less than the bombastic Bishop. He opens the door. A drunken outcast lurches in. It is Robert, Mary's father, brother of Manson, although Robert does not know it.

Manson invites this bearded, dirty, unkempt man to sit and eat. Robert is astonished at this hospitality. He has come to see his little girl. He doesn't expect any such welcome. In the midst of his meal, in steps his brother, the Vicar. He is startled and angry.

The Vicar: "Robert, what have you come for?"

Robert: "*You* arst me that?"

The Vicar: "Yes, I do, Bob. . . ."

Robert: "Why, to see my little gel, o' course—Gawd curse you!"

The vicar wavers and staggers out of the room. Robert, his outcast brother, watches him go out with scorn and then turns to Manson and speaks:

Robert: "See that blighter? That's the bloke as was born with no bowels! 'E might a-made a man o' me once, if 'e'd tried; but 'e didn't—'im and 'is like, Hm! Dam foolish, I calls it, don't you?"

Manson: "Yes, both; foolish and—damned!"

Robert turns and looks into Manson's face for the first time as the curtain falls on the first act. Both Mary and Robert have recognized that there is something unusual, something friendly, something brotherly, something holy, about "The Servant in the House."

Act Two

The thought of this act is centred on the Bishop of Lancashire. He is to arrive. He is the brother of the Vicar's wife, and is all that is unwholesome and unholy in the church; selfish, materialistic; in the church for what he can get out of it; a despicable type.

As the act opens, Manson and Robert are talking. Robert is still eating.

Then the Bishop arrives and there is great excitement. The Bishop cannot hear well and carries a trumpet.

This selfish old Bishop and Manson get to talking about building Cathedrals, and he thinks of Manson as the famous Bishop of Benares. One sentence in the conversation reveals the selfish soul of the Bishop of Lancashire, and it is also a symbol of a good many people in the church of today. Manson tricks the old Bishop by saying, sarcastically:

Manson: "God's not watching; let's give as little and grab as much as we can!"

Bishop: "Ssh! My dear brother! Remember who's present? (He glances toward Robert) However. . . . (coughs) we will return to that later. I begin to understand you!"

Here is a perfect contrast between a selfish, worldly materialist in the church and a Christ-like Bishop; the Bishop of Lancashire as contrasted with Manson, the Bishop of Benares or "The Servant in the House."

The perfect contrast is revealed in this discussion about building a Cathedral when the old deaf Bishop begs Manson to tell him about his church. Then comes one of the most sublime pictures of a spiritual church building in all literature:

Manson: "I am afraid you may not consider it an altogether substantial concern. It has to be seen in a certain way, under certain conditions. Some people never see it at all. This is no dead pile of stone. *It is a living thing.* When you enter it you hear a sound—a sound as of some mighty poem chanted. Listen long enough, and you will learn that it is made up of the beating of human hearts, of the nameless music of men's souls—that is, if you have ears.

"If you have you will presently see the church itself a looming mystery of many shapes and shadows, leaping sheer from floor to dome. The work of no ordinary builder.

"The pillars of it go up like the brawny trunks of heroes; the sweet human flesh of men and women is moulded about its bulwarks, strong, impregnable; the faces of little children laugh out from every corner-stone; the terrible spans and arches of it are the joined hands of comrades; and up in the heights and spaces there are inscribed the numberless musings of the dreamers of the world. It is yet building—building and built upon. Sometimes the work goes forward in deep darkness; sometimes in blinding

light; now beneath the burden of unutterable anguish; now to the tune of a great laughter and heroic shoutings like the cry of thunder. (More softly) Sometimes, in the silence of the night-time, one may hear the tiny hammerings of the comrades at work up in the dome—the comrades that have climbed ahead."

The old Bishop of Lancashire had dropped his trumpet and hadn't heard a word of this sublime description of the Church of God in human hearts, but Robert the outcast looks up and understands. He speaks.

Robert (slowly): "I think I begin to understand you, comrade; especially that bit abaht . . . (his eyes stray upwards) the 'ammerins' an' the . . . harches. . . . an'. . . .Hmp! I'm only an 'og. . . . S'pose there's no drain 'ands wanted in that there church o' yours?"

Manson: "Drains are a very important question there at present."

This play on drains is a symbol used by the dramatist. The drains in this very Vicarage are stopped up. There is a stench in the Vicar's home. The outcast brother is a drain-cleaner. There is also something that smells to the heavens in the attitude of the Vicar toward his brother and all humanity.

Act Three

The heart of this act is a conversation between Mary and her own father, Robert the outcast. She does not know that he is her father, but he knows that she is his daughter. It is a tense situation. Mary, imbued by the example of Manson, "The Servant in the House," wants to win Robert. She wants to befriend

him. Robert is a poor outcast. She wants to help him. Manson has redeemed her to his ways and attitudes. Mary and Robert talk alone.

Mary: "What's your wish?"

Robert: "I want my little girl."

Mary: "I want my father! Isn't it strange—both of our wishes alike? You want your little girl, and I my father!"

Robert: "Per'aps he's had a hard life—a bitter life—same as I 'ave, Miss—" (breaks down.)

Mary: "That may be, but I'll find him, and he'll be brave, and beautiful, and good. He must be. Oh, please don't take away my little dream!"

Robert: "All right, Miss—I won't; s'elp me Gawd, I won't take away your little dream. You'll find your father some day, and you'll find him brave, and beautiful, and good!"

It is the old, old story of expecting great and beautiful and good things from human beings, and they will come to pass. It is only wishing hard enough for them and they will come to pass. The preacher, the teacher, the parent, who expects great things, good things, brave and beautiful things from children and youth, will find that those things will come to pass. The wife that expects brave and beautiful and good things from a husband—if she expects them hard enough, they will come to pass.

When we din into the souls of children the expectation of badness; when we keep telling a child everlastingly that it is bad; that it lies; that it is a coward; we produce that kind of a child.

Human life, the world over, reacts in the same way.

Let us expect great things; brave and beautiful and good things of people, and they will respond by being brave and beautiful and good.

Act Four

The setting is the same in all of these acts, but in the fourth act the chief thing that happens is talk between the Vicar's wife and Mary, with the Vicar present, in which the Vicar's wife is trying to further poison Mary's mind against her father by telling her what a wicked outcast her father is. However, she does not tell Mary that her father is actually in that house. She is hoping that Mary will not find that out, that Robert, the drain-man, is her father.

Then comes from the lips of Mary one of the most beautiful utterances of the play; an utterance which sums up the whole Christian philosophy:

Mary: "Supposing my father *is* the wicked man you say—the very wickedest man that ever lived. Don't you think that if we tried to love him very much, it might make a difference? When I find my father, he must be brave, he must be beautiful, he must be good! If I love him enough he will be! If I wish hard enough, I will find him at last!"

Such was the message of Jesus: "That ye love one another." Mary has caught the spirit of Jesus. There is no other way to reform an outcast. Love will do it, and nothing else. You cannot scold people into the Kingdom; you cannot whip them into the Kingdom; you cannot argue them into the Kingdom; you cannot threaten them with force into the Kingdom. You

can only love them into the Kingdom! Mary knew, because she had been with "The Servant in the House" and she had caught his beautiful Christ-like spirit!

Act Five

The action is moving swiftly to its end. The setting is the same. Mary is still talking with the Vicar and the Vicar's wife about her unknown father, whom she insists she will some day find, and he will be "brave, he will be beautiful, he will be good!"

It is a moving phrase for a preacher to hurl into the hearts of his people. They will never forget it. Little does this beautiful child-like girl realize, as she talks to her aunt, saying over and over again that her father "must be brave, he must be beautiful, he must be good," that that father is in that very house with her and that she has been talking with him in the person of the drain-man, Robert by name, the tramp, the outcast; and that her very belief in him, her ideal about that father which she will some day find, her cry to him: "Don't take away my little dream" has remade that man's courage, his very soul!"

Then comes that stirring scene. Robert himself has been down under the church inspecting the drains, trying to find out where that stench comes from.

In the midst of the talk about her father which is going on between the Vicar, Mary, and the Vicar's wife—Mary defending her father, without knowing that he is near—in steps that father. He has just come up from the drains. He is covered with the vilest kind of dirt. He begins to tell the story of what he found in that drain:

Robert: "I followed up that drain, up through the sludge, puffin' and blowin' like a bally ole cart-'orse; strooth, it seemed miles. Talk abaht bee-utiful, ma'am, it 'ud 'a done your 'eart good, it would really. Rats!—'Undreds on em, ma'am, I'm bitten clean through in places! 'Owever, I pushed my way through, some'ow, 'oldin' my nose and fightin' for my breath till at last I got to the end—and then I soon saw wot was the matter . . . It's under the church—that's where it is! I know it's the church, cos I 'eard 'The Church's One Foundation' on the organ, rumblin' up over my 'ead! Well, I. . . ."

There is a sudden light on Mary's face as she listens to this dirty drain-man telling his story of bravery and heroism. His humility, his willingness to do the dirty thing for the church. It all sweeps over her at once. She leaps to her feet and faces Robert with a divine radiance shining in her eyes:

Mary: "I know who you are!"

Robert: "Me?"

Mary: "Yes, you are my father."

Robert: "'Ow the everlastin' did you know that?"

Mary (going up to him): "Because you are my wish come true; because you are brave, because you are very beautiful, because you are good!"

Then Manson steps forward into the scene. He is "The Servant in the House." He is the Vicar's brother in disguise. He speaks:

Manson: "Oh, beg pardon, sir; perhaps you'd like to know—the Bishop of Benares is here."

The Vicar: "What, already? Let's have him at once!"

Manson: "He is already here."

The Vicar: "What do you mean? Where is he?"

Manson: "Here." (The Vicar steps back, gazing at him, suddenly comprehending.)

The Vicar: "In God's name, who are you?"

Manson: "In God's name—your brother."

The Vicar takes his hand, sinking to his knees, sobbing, as one broken but healed. We remember that moment in "The Fool" when the young preacher is in the church alone with his sorrow. A figure approaches him in the dim light and speaks. That figure looks like the Christ. Gilchrist cried out:

Daniel: "In God's name, who are you?"

Poor Man: "I am a Jew!"

And as he speaks, slowly the Christmas tree and everything beneath is illuminated by the Star of Bethlehem. The choir is singing "Hark the Herald Angels Sing" in an adjoining room.

A similar dialogue occurs in "The Passing of the Third Floor Back." Vivian is talking with "The Stranger." She has suddenly discovered that he has a strange glory about his face; that he is something more than human. She was about to sell her soul, and this stranger stirred something in her that made that impossible. The firelight falls on her face as they two stand there alone:

Vivian: "Who are you? I know your voice. I hear it in the wind. I hear it in the silence of the night. Who—in God's name,—who—are—you?"

Stranger: "I am—a fellow-lodger. Good night!"

These three great plays about Christ-like characters in every day life end in the same way, with somewhat the same phrases, as will be seen; they end with a sudden and startling revelation of Christ in a human soul.

The Vicar: "In God's name—who are you?"

Manson: "In God's name—your brother!"

And we hear the echo of the text: "He that saith he is in the light, and hateth his brother, is in darkness even until now!"

CHAPTER IX

"THE MIRACLE"

BY MAX REINHARDT

A MESSAGE OF SUFFERING, SIN AND SACRIFICE

"And with his stripes we are healed."—Isaiah 53 : 5.

One of the miracles of "The Miracle" is that the Century Theatre of New York, Convention Hall of Kansas City, and a score of other worldly buildings have been transformed into churches by the sheer beauty and wonder of this great drama.

There is a new era in the theatrical world when such dramas as "The Big Parade," "The Ten Commandments," "Ben Hur" and "The Miracle" play to crowded houses as they have been doing all over the United States for several years.

It is not only a tribute to the theatrical world that they produce such plays, but it is more of a tribute to the common people that such plays are patronized. One has hopes for humanity when one sees how wonderfully these four great plays with a purpose are crowded in our American cities.

"The Miracle" gets us back to the old religious plays again. The Drama began in Biblical days, and in the Church. It is what might be called The Pageantry of Religion. All great dramas really had their birth in

religion, and now after long wanderings, such wanderings as the nun Megildis had during her seven years of answering the lure and the piping call of pleasure, the drama has come back to the church; back to its home; back to its God.

For long centuries the church spurned the drama, spurned its own child; but now it is beginning to see how great spiritual truths may be taught through the pageantry of religious movements.

Dean Inge of St. Paul's was right when he said that the new prophets would be the dramatists.

Here is a great symbol of tolerance. Here is a German Jew taking a Catholic theme, and bringing out of it the miracle of preaching to a Protestant and a Catholic audience alike. Here is the best antidote to Intolerance that I have ever seen. Here is a perfect illustration of the fact that in our fundamental social and religious emotions we worship one God in the end; and we *can* worship in brotherhood and love.

THE STORY OF THE MIRACLE AS IT MOVES

The First scene is The Cathedral. You sit in a great cathedral, with dim, mysterious lights, great windows of beauty with light pouring through them, the perfume of incense, candles here and there mounting up on the great columns and pillars; the altar lighted with innumerable candles.

The Cathedral is full. A service is going on. The bells have rung, and the Cathedral has filled up with humanity of every type.

There is a miracle-working statue; the Virgin Mother with a babe in her arms.

A crippled piper is brought in, and he is miraculously healed. The crowd breaks into joy.

When the service is over, the great crowd leaves the cathedral.

A young nun has just been appointed the Sacristan, and when the crowd leaves the Cathedral, she is performing her duties of putting out the candles and locking up the Cathedral. At the last door she meets the healed piper, who has about him a crowd of children. He is playing his flute. He is like the Pied Piper of Hamelin. There is a lure about his music and the children follow him and dance to his music.

As the nun looks out from her duties, the children surround her and force her to dance with them. At a tragic moment, the Abbess appears, and is shocked at the worldly actions of the young nun. She denounces her and punishes her by making her pray all night in the Cathedral alone.

When night comes on, the nun, alone in the Cathedral, prays before the beautiful miraculous statue; prays that she may be allowed some of the pleasures of life. She points to the babe in the Virgin Mother's arms and prays that she may have her yearning for a child satisfied.

As the young nun walks about in the Cathedral, and as she kneels in prayer, she hears several sounds outside of the Cathedral. She hears the singing of a nightingale. It seems to call her outside of that dark Cathedral to the joys of love and life.

She hears the piper piping. The piper is the symbol of sensual pleasure and as such, he finally leads the

nun through seven years of seeking for that illusive thing we call pleasure.

She hears the sound of knocking; loud and tumultuous knocking. She knows who it is. It is the Knight. For just before she came into the Cathedral, while she was dancing, the piper brought a beautiful young knight to see her, and the knight fell in love with her and tried to take her away with him. That is his knocking she hears at each door, and she knows it. Her woman's heart tells her that.

So these sounds lure and call her from her vows, from her duties, from her religion: The singing of the nightingale, the playing of the piper, the sound of her lover's knocking, the memory of the knight.

When the loud knocking is at its height, the nun rushes upon the Virgin Mother with a passionate prayer for release to go out to love and life.

Then suddenly a low peal of thunder is heard. It is dark in the Cathedral. The great doors swing open.

The knight, in splendid array, appears on the altar table in silver armour. The piper is by his side, symbol of Pleasure. The nun points to her holy garments; then slowly unlooses them and lets them fall to the stone floor. The knight wraps her in his blue mantle and they go out of the Cathedral.

A sound as if all the angels of Heaven and Christ Himself were sighing with pity and regret, sweeps through the Cathedral.

Then a light begins to glow over where the Madonna stands. She smiles. Then she steps down from her exalted pedestal. She puts on the gown of the departed

nun, takes up her keys, goes to the tower and rings the morning bell. She is going to take the place of the sinful nun. The Madonna will not let the nun lose her holy place. She will let her go and learn that life is not all love and laughter; that life is suffering and loneliness. She knows that the nun, like the Prodigal Son, and like the Prodigal Daughter that she is, will want to come back to her old place. It is a beautiful symbolism; that the Virgin Mother herself is willing to take the nun's place; to bear her stripes; and it brings to our hearts the echo of that beautiful text: "With his stripes we are healed."

"Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows; . . . he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed."

The second scene is called *The Knight*.

The great cathedral columns through the cloud of incense, turn to great trees, with the knight and the nun there, preceded by the piper.

The piper plays and the nun dances. The knight tries to catch her and they romp through the trees. He tries to kiss her. He succeeds. Then he buries her form in a passionate embrace.

In the midst of this scene, a robber band appears, headed by the count. He looks upon the nun to lust after her. The count knows that to get the nun he must capture the knight, so his men tie the knight to a tree. Then the count compels the nun to dance for him. Then the piper slips up and cuts the ropes that bind the

knight. The knight fights the count, and is killed.

The robber-count rushes off with the poor nun, and the piper and the Shadow of Death appear. Then the piper, symbol of Sin, leaps off into the darkness of the woods. Death alone remains.

And, as we look upon the havoc that Sin brings; and see the lure of it, and its inevitable end; as we see always after each scene this gruesome figure of Death; we hear the echo of another Biblical text: "The soul that sinneth, it shall die."

Scene Three is called *The Count*.

The robber-count has carried the nun into his castle. There is a great banquet going on.

The nun seems not to see what is going on about her, but is looking far away. She is perhaps thinking of her murdered knight, or perhaps she is seeing the old Cathedral, and her sister nuns; or perhaps she is beginning to understand that "the soul that sinneth, it shall die"; that she who follows pleasure and its lure—she who follows the highways of sin,—comes to unutterable woe and misery.

The banqueters are drunk. The piper—that ever-present symbol of worldly pleasure and sin—is leading this company of licentious revelers in a filthy dance. Finally the dance becomes an orgy.

The piper leaps to the nun's side and plays a tune into her ears, and she sees a long procession of nuns and hears the cathedral bells again; and then suddenly she also leaps up and begins to dance.

The prince appears and sees the nun. The prince is fascinated by the pale nun, and the count becomes jealous. A fight follows. Then the piper suggests that

the count and the prince play a game of cards to see who gets the nun. The prince wins and carries her away with him.

The drunken count tries to follow, but falls over in a drunken stupor. Just then the piper runs up and thrusts a knife into his hand. The count grasps it, realizes his loss, and plunges it into his own heart.

The Shadow of Death appears again. Then he disappears and the piper is seen standing alone beside his second victim, playing the tune of death. And in that tune we hear the echo of that ancient text: "The soul that sinneth, it shall die!"

The Third Scene is called *The Prince*.

There is a mock bridal ceremony between the prince and the nun. It is a gruesome and a terrible desecration of the marriage ceremony. I often wonder if it is not somewhat in the spirit of present day weddings. I have had to stop more often in the midst of weddings in the last five years to insist upon their sacredness than I ever did before. There is a certain spirit of mockery and play about the attitude of people toward weddings these days that reminds a thoughtful preacher of this mock ceremony between the prince and the nun. Its very grotesqueness sends a chill of horror through the heart of one who has ideals about marriage and its sacredness.

The piper as usual presides over this mock ceremony. The wedding party withdraws and leaves the prince and the nun alone. The prince is about to embrace his new bride. The Emperor has entered, and halts them

in the midst of their embrace. The Emperor sees that the nun does not welcome the embrace of the prince, who is leading her towards his bed, and reproves his son.

The prince withdraws, but summons his followers, and a few minutes later, aroused by the piper, they break into the room where the Emperor and the nun are, and in the fight that follows, the piper thrusts a knife into the hands of the Emperor, and he lunges at his second assailant. His aim is true, and the man falls dead at his feet. The piper leans over and lifts the mask, and the Emperor finds that he has killed his own son.

The Emperor rises with a horrible insane laugh and we know that in that instant, as he realizes that he has murdered his own son, the Emperor has gone mad. The nun leads him away, but the piper remains behind, once again to play the death melody over his third victim, and the echo of that old Biblical verse comes into our hearts again: "The soul that sinneth, it shall die!"

Scene Four is called *The Emperor*.

The setting is a Coronation Room in the Palace. The great Cathedral has been transformed again. The insane Emperor sits on his throne with the nun beside him. The mad Emperor holds a puppet of his dead son in his arms and talks to it during the Coronation ceremony.

The piper is the master of ceremonies. He has a golden staff and directs the golden masked figures, the soulless figures.

There is the symbolism of an Upper World and an Underworld here. The upper world is symbolized by golden masked figures and the underworld by black masked figures. As the Coronation ceremony goes on, a dark mass collects outside, with hate in its heart.

In the midst of the Coronation, the mob storms the doors of the palace with axes and hammers and poles, and with murder in their hearts. The insane Emperor is led away a prisoner with great chains dragging behind. The Empress is dragged to the street.

The piper stands in the midst of this terrible mob and plays his death music again. Back of him the Shadow of Death dances uncovered.

Scene Five is called *The Tribunal*.

The mob has dragged the poor nun-queen to the Tribunal. It is in the centre of a great square. The Tribunal of the revolutionists tries and condemns and beheads several of the Court. The Empress is led to the dock. She is to be beheaded. They have bound on her back the life-sized puppet of the dead prince.

She is stoned. The Emperor suddenly recognizes the puppet of his son and runs and grabs it from the nun's back. They drag the Empress to the guillotine. The ax is lifted. Then suddenly, as is often true of mobs, the people change their minds and tear her away from the executioner.

A wild orgy of indiscriminate fighting follows. Everybody strikes at somebody. None knows at whom. When it is all over, the square is covered with the dead.

And once again the piper, symbol of Pleasure and

Sin, appears alone, erect, and blowing his death melody; and the echo of those words come back to us: "The soul that sinneth, it shall die!"

Scene Six is called *The Manger*.

It is a miserable place; this cow-shed manger. A group of dirty, cold soldiers and girls are seated, throwing dice. The piper comes in in shabby soldier's garb.

The nun follows him with humility, serving him faithfully. He is all she has left. She who has been a queen is now an outcast.

Even the piper is bored with her. He turns to the harlots who follow the soldiers. He plays his bagpipe. Megildis brings it to him. He wants her to dance with him. She refuses, but he will have no refusal. She refuses again and then the piper raises his fist to strike her. Then she points to her body and tells him that she is big with child. Then he laughs at her and pushes her away from him.

Not true to life? You say that? I could from my own experience give a parallel instance for every scene in this tragedy.

It was after the war. An English girl came to me in Detroit. She had come from a fine English family. She had been sent to western Canada. She was a Y.W.C.A. worker. A man betrayed her. When she found out what was the matter, she went to this man, thinking he would at least sympathize with her. But he sneered at her and said: "Oh yes, so the little Y.W.C.A. secretary is in trouble, too?"

She came to me with her little tow-headed boy, a darling. I got her a home and she worked for three years in an Orphans' School, and finally married a fine man, to whom she told the whole tale in my office.

But I shall never forget the sneer of that business man: "So the little Y.W.C.A. secretary is in trouble, too?"

And that is always the tale. The man hates then. He has contempt. He sneers. His fists double up. He has no pity.

The piper threatens to dance with one of the other girls. Then Megildis consents to dance with him, and dances until she falls in a faint on the floor. The piper pushes her from him in disgust, toward one of the soldiers, and leaves her.

That last gesture is the most significant of all. The piper, when he finds that she is big with child, pushes her from him—toward one of the dirty soldiers. They all go out and leave her alone—an outcast—deserted—alone—tragically alone. That is the end—always—of the girl who sins. It is not in human nature that she shall have human sympathy from her betrayer.

Silence a few minutes in the dim stable manger.

Then a terrible cry pierces that silence.

Then a Star slowly rises above that Manger.

Then slowly the vision of a pale young mother appears in one corner of the Manger; a mother cradling a young child.

Then off in the distance come three Kings from the East.

There is the sound of a Cradle Song.

Scene Seven is called *The Dance of Death*.

It is a winter's night and soldiers are marching along a wintry road. The snow falls, the wind blows.

Megildis follows the piper, carrying her babe. He pushes her from him. She sinks in the wayside in the snow, as if dying. As she lies there, a ghostly procession passes, led by the Shadow of Death.

The knight, the count, the prince, the mad Emperor, the dead victims of the mob; all of whom she has led to their doom in her search for life and pleasure, led by the piper, symbol of Sin. This is the Procession of Death, led by the Shadow of Death, beating the Death Drum. They beckon her to follow them. She tries to rise, but the piper stops her again. He will not even yield her to Death. He still wants her for his purposes. He plays the old alluring tunes again, but for the first time she resists him. She battles against his old power over her, and in so doing, she breaks the chains that bind her.

She attempts for the first time to fold her hands and say an old prayer of childhood: "Our Father which art in Heaven. . ." Through this prayer she breaks the piper's power over her, and he slinks away.

A warm ray of light appears as if coming from some Cathedral window. The light falls on the snow. She drags herself toward that light. The piper has gone; he knows that through that prayer his power is broken.

And at the close of this scene we hear the echo of an old and beautiful New Testament phrase: "Know the truth, and the truth shall make you free," which

means: "Know Purity, know Love, know Righteousness, know Christ, and the Christ shall make you free."

"Gaze starward, stand free and unearthy
Free-souled as a banner unfurled;
Be worthy! Oh Brother, be worthy,
For a God was the price of the world."

Freedom came when she resisted the piper's lures; when she broke loose from Sin; when she dipped deeper to her soul. She learned that "There is a power on your side which Hell cannot control."

Scene Eight is *The Cathedral*.

The nun drags herself toward that light and finds herself inside the Cathedral.

The Madonna has carried out the duties of the nun for seven years, and for seven years the pedestal has been empty.

It is Christmas Eve. She opens the doors to the children's procession. They approach singing an old Christmas hymn. Three Kings appear. The Divine Mother is left alone in the Cathedral.

It is snowing outside. The wind is howling.

The Divine Mother goes to the pedestal where the statue used to be, and takes off the gown of the nun Megildis, and leaves it on the floor with the keys.

She becomes the statue again.

The wind blows open the doors of the Cathedral, and the poor weary nun comes creeping home again. She sinks on the floor. Then she creeps up to the statue. Her child falls from her arms on the floor. She prays. Then she goes to pick up her child and finds that it is dead.

She notices that her sacred vestments and her keys are on the floor, just as they were when she left the Cathedral seven years ago.

The Madonna bends over, lifts the dead child into her own arms, and as she does so, the great bells of the Cathedral boom loudly and happily.

The Abbess enters, followed by the nuns. They find the statue has been restored. There is singing and rejoicing. The ecstasy mounts higher and higher. The Abbess lifts the nun, guilty and penitent, to see what a miracle has occurred. She listens to the music of the bells, the singing of the choir, the chanting of the priests, the Bishop, and suddenly a voice sounds to her; the voice of Pardon and Redemption for her sins.

It is the old, old story of the Prodigal Son. This time it is the Prodigal Daughter, come home from the swine, come home from feeding on husks, come home to love and forgiveness and happiness.

THE MIRACLES TAUGHT BY THIS MIRACLE

The first Miracle taught by this play called "The Miracle" is the physical miracle of the healing of the lame piper. I would have you note that the physical miracles of Christ's ministry were the least of His miracles. We are often tempted to over-emphasize the physical miracles. He Himself did not do this. He only performed physical miracles in order that He might point out the more vital, spiritual miracles of His loving and His healing.

The second Miracle in this play is the miracle of Love and a woman's hunger for a child in her arms. This is a beautiful thing when it begins, but it is a

horrible thing when that miracle turns to mockery and sin and lust. That is but a short step in this life; a short step from the miracle of Love to the sin of the senses.

The third Miracle is the miracle of good and pure memories. We never get away from these. They came to the nun in the midst of the revelry in the Count's banquet-hall, and she never was able to get away from those beautiful days spent in the Cathedral. So come to us beautiful days in church, in our homes, with our mothers, with ideals, with love—thank God for the miracles of good memories.

The fourth Miracle is the miracle of a load of sin rolled from one's back. Like that of the pilgrim in "Pilgrim's Progress"; when he came to a hill called Calvary, his load of sin suddenly fell from his back, rolled down that hill, and disappeared into a deep tomb.

The fifth Miracle is the miracle of Christ's bearing our stripes for us. When the nun left the Church the Madonna stepped down from her pedestal, and through seven years took her place; wore her garments; made of herself a servant, a keeper of the Cathedral; a scrub girl; a servant of God.

And was it not Jesus who said that one who wanted to be a brother should be willing to wash another's feet; to be his servant; to serve him; that such ministry was Divine; that it was God-like? Was it not He, the Christ?

And this beautiful chapter of Isaiah which tells of Christ bearing our stripes for us, carrying our loads, and we being healed with his suffering—is not that

the spirit of this story, and the greatest miracle of this Miracle?

But the greatest miracle of this "Miracle" is the miracle of forgiveness that comes to the wandering nun, the outcast, the Prodigal Daughter.

We think of Dora in "Beside the Bonnie Brier Bush."

We think of Queen Guinivere to whom King Arthur said: "And lo, I forgive thee as Eternal God forgives!"

And these are the real miracles of "The Miracle."

CHAPTER X

"THE FOOL IN CHRIST"

BY GERHART HAUPTMANN

THE MESSAGE OF A MAN WHO BELIEVED

"He fell asleep—when he slept—over Jesus' footsteps."

The life of Jesus Christ has always had a strange fascination for writers of both fact and fiction. It has lured them like a light of love.

Each year the book world pours out books of every type on this everlasting theme. I read them all, for the life of Jesus is ever alluring to me. Annually, I like to select what I consider the best of these books about Christ or Imitations of Christ, and preach this strange and ever new tale of the Christ Man.

A story written about these books in itself would be a strange story. In modern days we have had Dr. Sheldon's "In His Steps" with its wide reading of more than 22,000,000 copies, and now to be put into pictures.

"Ben Hur," that beautiful story of the Christ by General Lew Wallace, has found its way into the deeper recesses of the world's affection, and it too, after selling millions of copies as fiction, after having been shown perennially in the drama, is now in pictures.

"The Passing of the Third Floor Back," is this strange story of a Christ-like man in modern life set to drama and framed in flaming faith, so that this hectic age may see and understand. What "The Passing of the Third Floor Back" did not do for this interpretation, "The Servant in the House" did do. Thus we have had in dramatic form these three great tales of the Christ in our generation.

Even more recently in fiction and drama than any of these that I have mentioned, is "The Fool" by Channing Pollock, a dramatic story of a man who lived and acted like Christ in the social and industrial world of this day of ours.

Marie Corelli's "Barabbas," Hall Caine's "The Christian," Balzac's "Jesus Christ in Flanders," "When it was Dark," and innumerable stories and novels of Jesus Christ have come and gone. Just within the last few months Hichens has given us "The Unearthly," but of them all, the most real, the most tragic, the most stirring and awakening is "The Fool in Christ" by Gerhard Hauptmann.

Here we see a man, a poor fool though he is, who "fell asleep—when he slept—over Jesus' footsteps."

One morning I saw a beautiful brown bird dog that was lost. He ran in and out of a drugstore which was full of High School students. That beautiful dog sniffed the air in that store. He ran about frantically. Then he would lift his delicate nose again and sniff the air. Then he would run up to a group of boys and girls and sniff their clothes. Then he would run out of the drugstore and back again—ever frantically, eagerly, wistfully, almost desperately—searching and

scenting—for somebody. He had evidently lost his young master. He was looking for but one human being. Everybody was moved by his search. Men and women talked to that dog and patted his head, but he paid them no heed. He knew what he wanted, and he was not to be turned aside by anybody or anything. He was searching for one person, his master. He would not be detained. A boy pitched him the loose end of a ham sandwich, but the dog did not pause in his search. He did not even sniff at that meat. He was too eager to find his master. It was a beautiful Faith, and Love, and Loyalty—almost a passionate tragedy of loyalty that I witnessed.

So search the fools in Christ; so searched this particular "Fool in Christ," Emanuel Quint; searched like one of the "Hounds of Heaven." So he hung over the footprints of Jesus, searching them out with wistful eagerness.

The story of Emanuel Quint is brief and beautiful. He was the son of a woman who knew not who the boy's father was. Later in the story we learn that that father was a Catholic priest. The step-father hated Emanuel Quint because, like Saint Joan, the boy had visions, and his visions told him that he was to follow Christ—even unto death if need be; that he was to take no thought for what he was to wear or eat; that the Lord would provide; and that he was to spend his days and his nights seeking the Lord's way and will, and in telling what he heard and saw, so that all the world might know of the Lord Christ.

He had a strangely convincing way about him and soon won a large group of followers. He himself was

greatly surprised and mystified by the power he had to win followers. He soon became convinced himself that he was a disciple of Jesus, and before the story is ended, he actually becomes convinced that he is a reincarnated Christ Himself, come to earth again.

Striking incidents illustrate how this feeling grew on him, that he was either a specially chosen disciple of Christ, or that he was actually the Christ Himself. These strange incidents group themselves into two divisions.

THE PARALLELS BETWEEN HIS WAY OF LIFE AND CHRIST'S

His first message, a message which came to him through his voices, was the old message of John the Baptist and of Jesus Himself. One day in a village square this strange, red-headed, slender, wistful-looking man stood on a barrel at the time of the morning church service and started to cry:

"Ye men, dear brethren; ye women, dear sisters! Repent! For the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand!"

For which preaching he was thrown into prison and called a fool by the village.

The second strange parallel between himself and Christ was that strange morning, after he had been walking all night like a lonely tramp through the woods and fields, plucking roots and fruit here and there to eat, praying and singing aloud, that the dawn came and an ordained preacher of the neighbourhood, Brother Nathaniel, was so moved by the man and his visions that he walked with him out into a stream and baptized him. When the baptism was over, a Dove flew

into a nearby tree and sang beautifully. Brother Nathaniel was startled at the parallel.

"The clear, cool water of a brook flowed through the fields, in some places freely reflecting the heavens, in others concealed by small groups of trees and bushes. A wood-dove was cooing in the lofty branches of a noble old birch." Nuthatches flew from bush to bush. The laughter of a magpie resounded heartily.

"Thus as the water—to him consecrated water—ran over his head, shoulders, and breast, the poor workingman's son not only felt the thrills of a holy ceremony, but his heart also grew lighter.

"The heaven unfurled its broad blue silk tent over him. The sun was his chandelier. The larks were singing to the son of man. The crops were ripening for the son of man. The groves were whispering his name in homage."

Third, he went into the wilderness for forty days and forty nights, because he wanted to be like Christ. The author says:

"He wanted to remain forty days and forty nights in the wilderness, and like his prototype expose himself to all the hardships of want and weather. In that period the Savior and the Savior alone was to dwell in him. He wanted to give himself up to Him without reserve."

Fourth, came the temptation to Emanuel Quint, the poor fool in Christ, who actually wandered for forty days and forty nights in the wilderness. Night after night he slept in a little narrow slit between two great

boulders. This hiding place was on a precipitous crag overlooking a great valley. He could see the people going and coming below, searching for him, because his reputation had spread broadcast, even among those who mocked him.

His first temptation was that "he was a God." He would often stand on the edge of the cliff with a wild look in his eyes, and be tempted to cast himself down. He sometimes looked upon birds of prey swooping down on the abyss below, and then again he would hear mocking laughter from below, tempting him to jump.

Then came physical temptation as he lay in his narrow outdoor cell, and dreams of avarice. Naked women and lust came to him in his half-delirium.

He hated himself for all of these temptations of the flesh; the temptation to be God, the temptation of the physical; and finally, the temptation to perform a miracle. For he *knew* that if he jumped off of that crag he would float off into the air like a dove soaring. He *knew* that. He was "The Fool in Christ."

"When he had climbed above the zone of the trees, the Fool grew easier at heart. He saw the world beneath him. The mountains had become a stool for his feet. He breathed freely. He turned to the infinite expanse of Heaven and said, 'God!'"

"He turned to the gay, undulating carpet of the plains, flecked with the shadows of white clouds, and said, 'God!'"

"He turned his back to the depths and looked,

marvelling upon the jagged walls and ledges of the mountains, and said, 'God!'

"He looked upon the gigantic boulders tumbled one over the other as if great Cyclopean hands had gathered them together in a thousand years of work, and suddenly before he was capable of uttering the name of God, a voice whispered in his ear: 'If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread.'"

But he was on his guard and would not be tempted.

Then came a fourth temptation, the temptation of wealth. And it suddenly seemed to him that he could reach out and take hold of a golden thread which he saw dangling before him. He felt that if he would follow that golden thread he could follow it through all the labyrinths of human intercourse, "in order no longer to be poor, despised, and wretched."

Then came a fifth temptation on that mountain crag: the temptation to fight back at the world which despised him, abused him, called him fool, stoned him, and hated him.

"He would do all that they would do—fight hate with hate, rage with rage, abuse with abuse. War would be brought against war, lie against lie, deceit against deceit. . . . *And . . . of course . . . he would have to renounce Jesus.*"

But over all these temptations he triumphed.

And there is no greater summing up of the Gospel of the Eternal Christ than this last temptation of the Fool in Christ.

Though he was but a fool, he knew that Christians

do not fight hate with hate, abuse with abuse, rage with rage, war with war, lies with lies, and deceit with deceit.

Here is the burning focus of the Gospel, and how sadly and how ignobly we all fail. "Why We Christians Fail" is a prose book which carries the same message. We Christians fail because we fight hate with hate, rather than with love; because we fight rage with rage, rather than with kindness; because we try the world's way and fight abuse with abuse rather than with tender words; because we fight; because we fight—in the name of the Prince of Peace—war with war—and God pity us—the world goes down to degradation and death because we will not be Christ's and follow Him.

And even the Fool in Christ knew—on the Hill of his temptation—that if he fought hate with hate, abuse with abuse, rage with rage, war with war, lies with lies, deceit with deceit, envy with envy, quarrelling with quarrelling, jealousy with jealousy, evil gossip with evil gossip, anger with anger—even the Fool in Christ knew that, as he expressed it: "And, of course, he would have to renounce Jesus."

THE PARALLEL OF HIS PASSIONS AND CHRIST'S PASSIONS

The Fool in Christ had strange parallels in his life, like unto those of Christ's life, in addition to these events that stood out. These parallels were in his passions.

I am going to express these passions in single sentences from the book. These sentences will also express

the spiritual teachings which I want this Dramatic Book Sermon to carry.

A. "*Love of mankind gnawed at him!*"

This is always a characteristic of the follower of Christ. One may be able to test his religion by this test.

John Masfield has Saul Kane cry out, after his conversion, when a passion for his fellows came suddenly to him:

"I knew that I was done with sin,
I knew that Christ had given me birth
To brother all the souls on earth."

Are you interested in your fellow-humans across the seas; in the naked, filthy African; in the wily, squint-eyed Japanese; in the strangely dressed, white-robed Korean; in the little children of the earth, whether they be black or brown or white?

Does a love for mankind "gnaw" at your heart, as it did at the heart of the Fool in Christ? That is the supreme test.

This love of mankind which gnawed at the heart of the Fool "filled the Fool with a consuming passion. He wanted to go to his brothers and sisters. He wanted no longer to remain cold-hearted and apart from them, as he had done before in his self-seeking."

One of humanity's greatest sins is aloofness from the rest of humanity. A man gets a little money, or power, or social position, and he segregates and separates himself from the rest of humanity.

He leaves the day-coach of human life and the

tourist-cars of human life, to ride in the parlour and compartment cars.

One of the greatest sins of the employer is that of separating himself from his men. In the old days it was not so. Employers knew their men. A man may not in these days know every man by name, but he can save his eternal soul from the attitude of seclusion, segregation, and separation, by his very spirit toward labour and humanity.

The church which separates itself from the rest of humanity; which segregates itself; which stands aloof, and makes even the poorest man or woman feel unwelcome and lonely within its doors, is sinning the great social sin. God pity us if we do not have even as the Fool in Christ, a love of mankind that "gnaws at our souls."

B. *"Skepticism even in persons of culture and strong character cannot hold out permanently against absolute conviction."*

This accounted for the fact that Emanuel Quint had followers among students, rich people, poor people, hard-headed business men, and criminals. A reading of the book will reveal this startling truth. Why? Because in spite of the fact that he seemed to be a fool who called himself a disciple of Christ, and who finally believed that he was the reincarnation of Christ Himself, he had convictions about that matter. He had no doubts finally. Men could not resist him. He was certain. He *knew*!

When they arrested the Fool and took him to jail, as he walked along he said: "Do they not understand

that Christ is walking next to me on His way to the Cross?"

In jail Quint heard the faint footfalls of the Saviour, he saw Him enter through the creaking gate with slightly bowed head.

Said Jesus to him: "Brother Emanuel, lovest thou me?"

"Yea," said Emanuel, "More than myself!"

Said Jesus: "Brother Emanuel, lovest thou me?"

And when the dreamer again asserted his love, the voice answered: "Then, Emanuel Quint, I will remain with thee for ever!"

Then Jesus took Quint into His arms, their bodies pressed to each other "like long-separated brothers." Quint felt the Saviour's body, the Saviour's whole being enter into him and penetrate every part. The experience was inconceivable, marvelous in its absolute reality. For it seemed as if a mystic marriage took place; heart and soul, in every nerve, every pulse-beat, every drop of blood, and Jesus passed into His disciple and dissolved in him.

And after that Emanuel Quint *knew!*

We are a shifty set in the churches today. We have no knowledge, and no convictions. We have no passion about our religion. We have no certainty.

And this is the second great sin of the church today; that it has no convictions about anything. We are "Talking nonsense on the edge of an abyss." We are living in an age of "The degradation of love" and of all else that is sacred and high and holy.

We have no convictions about the sacredness of marriage and home. We have no convictions about the

laws of our nation. We break them at will for our own personal pleasure. We have no convictions about our churches, or about morals and ethics.

We have little convictions about honour or business ethics. We have no convictions today about giving honest toil for honest money.

We have no convictions about war and peace; about eternity and God and Christ. We are slipshod morally and religiously. We are lazy Christians. We take the easiest way. We are not willing to sacrifice. The Way of the Cross we shun, because we have no convictions. We could win the world to Christ if we had convictions.

It is a heartening thing to hear a man cry: "This one thing I *know*; that whereas I was blind, now I see!"

If we had more convictions in the church there would be less skepticism and doubt and agnosticism outside of the church. That was the thing which Sinclair Lewis could not understand about the group of men who made up his famous "Sunday School Class." He said to me time and time again: "Bill, they have no convictions. They have nothing that they would die for!"

He was right. Few talked in that class as if they had anything that they would die for!

But even "The Fool in Christ" had convictions, for was it not said of him as it will be said of any of us who believe, who have convictions, they will die for: "Scepticism, even in persons of culture and strong character, cannot hold out permanently against absolute conviction."

The preacher, the Sunday school teacher, the parent, and the Church; aye, even the Fool who has absolute convictions, may overcome the world and win the earth to Christ and God.

Our churches do not command the respect of men today because we do not have absolute convictions about Sin, about the Plan of Redemption, about God and Christ and Eternity.

Let us this day re-affirm our convictions:

We believe in God the Father.

We believe in Jesus Christ the Son and Elder Brother.

We believe that He lived and died to save the world.

We believe that His death was the Plan of Salvation.

We believe that it is possible for human beings to have a re-birth, a reconciliation with Christ and God.

We believe in Sin—that it crushes the life and light from human souls; and that conviction of sin and repentance from sin is the only way to God.

We believe in the Brotherhood of Humanity and in the Eternal.

Emanuel Quint had convictions because he was always listening to Heavenly voices. Those who listen to heavenly voices always have conviction in their souls. Joan of Arc convinced the soldiers, the Dauphin, and the world, because she *knew*. She had absolute convictions; absolute faith in the integrity of her voices. Of the Fool the author says:

"But the poor Fool in Christ was again listening to the rustle of angels' wings."

And again when an orthodox preacher was trying to

confuse him and to question his religious experience, with absolute conviction said the Fool:

"But I know I have been born again!"

And again this note of confidence and certainty rings out when the author describes the Fool going to meet his disciples one sunlit dawn:

"He stepped forward like a God!"

C. Man's marvellous capacity for transformation.

The Fool had a following of a dozen men and women. There were the millers, the bakers, Bohemian Joe, the thief, and others; all of them like the disciples of the Galilean King, crude and uncouth. But something happened to each soul through contact with this strange "Fool in Christ" and they became mentally alert, socially powerful, men who walked with pride, and in strength. The author says by way of comment on the changes that had come about in this crude army of men:

"And one who had seen these people in their former state, when bent and silent under the yoke of daily toil and want, would have been enlightened as to man's marvellous capacity for transformation."

So was it true in the days of Jesus. Follow Jesus through his few years of activity and everywhere he went he touched human lives and they were transformed. Human beings then as now had a marvellous capacity for transformation.

The twelve disciples themselves illustrate this principle better than any other group. Contact with Jesus proves to any human being what a marvellous capacity for transformation we humans have—thank God!

And what God did in the days of Jesus, and what He does in this strange story of "The Fool in Christ" He still does—and still can do—with any human being who will allow him access to his soul.

Billy Sunday knows the marvellous capacity of a human soul for transformation, and so do all men who work with human beings, that we all have a marvellous capacity for transformation.

We may go to the end of our days and not find out this truth about our own souls. We may stumble stupidly and blindly through life, only realizing half our powers, our capacities, our talents, our loves and emotional fountains. We may never become awakened. We may go along, all of our days, like "Beggars sitting on bags of gold." But that is only because we have not learned that we share "Man's marvellous capacity for transformation."

D. "And when he thought of Christ his heart ached."

Such was the love that the Fool had for Christ.

"Quint loved the Saviour. The poor Fool, or in this respect the Happy Fool, had conceived a love of the gracious Jesus so great that when he thought of Him his heart ached. His love for Jesus was not of this earth."

When he read the New Testament about this Jesus whom he loved so passionately: "He felt as if a dear hand in it always soothed his heart."

The cry of his heart was: "Make of me nothing but a word, a breath, a glance, a pulse-beat, of Thee!"

He was so simple in his passion for Jesus that:

"He felt like a child who believes that the earth and sky meet at the horizon and when you step across it, you will be in Heaven."

And so we have this Fool in Christ, who loved human beings so much that "Love of mankind gnawed at his heart," and who loved Christ so much that "When he thought of Him, his heart ached."

No wonder it is said of Emanuel that "when people approached him he instantly noticed the sorrow and the beauty in their faces."

Why? Because "when he thought of Christ, his heart ached."

It is well. The two attributes go together. To ache for Christ means to love human beings, for Christ died for such.

Emanuel Quint may have been a Fool, but he was "The Fool in Christ."

CHAPTER XI

"ONE INCREASING PURPOSE"

By A. S. M. HUTCHINSON

A MESSAGE OF CONVERSION

"And we know that all things work together for good . . . to them who are the called according to his purpose."—Romans 8:28.

"Yet I doubt not through the ages one increasing purpose runs;
And the thoughts of men are widened with the process of the suns."

—Tennyson.

"The Happy Warrior," "The Clean Heart," "If Winter Comes," and "This Freedom" all have been adaptable to Dramatic Book Sermons, as is the new Hutchinson novel, "One Increasing Purpose."

All of these Hutchinson books are real. They are true to life. They are deeply spiritual, particularly the one that we are to dramatize in this sermon. It stands side by side with such stories as Tolstoy's "The Resurrection," William Allen White's "In the Heart of a Fool," and Masfield's "The Everlasting Mercy." It is the story of the conviction and the conversion of a human soul. It is a sermon.

Every preacher in America ought to run with eager

feet to meet such a fellow-minister of God as Mr. Hutchinson.

It is the story of three brothers: Andrew, Charles, and Simon Paris—particularly of Simon—called Sim for short. It is also the story of three women incidentally; but all the time, and particularly, the story of one man, Simon, who is searching for God and the purpose that God has for him in life.

Hutchinson very rightly uses that immortal couplet of Tennyson's as the theme—it might be called Symphonic Theme—of his sermon or his novel. He does not repeat it continually throughout the book, but the reader does:

"Yet I doubt not through the ages one increasing purpose runs;
And the thoughts of men are widened with the process of the suns."

THE QUESTION

A question arises about Sim Paris, among his friends. He is changed. There is something different about him since the war. His brother Charles notices it and puts it this way:

"Sim hasn't half the spirits he used to have; he is changed in some mysterious way."

He has quit the army. He didn't like the army any longer. When somebody asked him why all he could say was: "Oh, I don't know." Then he would give a wistful, slightly embarrassed lilt of laughter. There was something strangely wistful about Sim at this time.

The feeling had come to him, now that he had been spared, now that he had survived the Great World

War, that there must be some purpose in his being spared. He couldn't get away from that feeling. He had seen his friends drop about him. Only a handful of his friends had survived. He had been in from the beginning. Death had brushed his soul many times. It was not by chance that he had been spared.

This feeling that there had been a purpose in his being spared gave him that wistful look. Then he wanted to tell somebody. He wanted somebody to talk it over with. He went about saying over and over to himself, with a wistful hunger in his heart:

"If only I could find someone to tell! If only I could find someone to tell! If only I could find someone to tell!"

One day he was walking alone in London. He had just been to visit his brother Charles. Charles wanted him to get a job, anything, just so he was working. Charles felt that if Sim got to work he would get over that foolish restlessness, that wistfulness, that feeling that there was a purpose in life for him; that feeling that he had been spared for something. Sim walked alone and suddenly found himself in front of a church. He walked in and sat down. He bowed his head in silence. He knew it not, but that wistful silence was prayer.

He had hardly seated himself when he began to think about his mother. It is a beautiful thing when a church suggests a mother. It is a terrible thing when a church does not suggest a mother. No mother can give a child a richer heritage than the heritage of memories that suggest prayer, the Bible, family prayer, and the church. That is what a mother-memory ought to sug-

gest. I wonder if the mothers of this generation are leaving memories behind which will suggest church and good and God to the children of tomorrow when they shall be wistful and perplexed?

It had always been Sim's habit, when a boy, to go to his mother's room the last thing before he went to bed. That had been their beautiful comradeship. If she had been asleep the night before when he came, she would always ask him the next morning:

"Did you come in to me last night, Sim?"

"Of course I did, mother."

She died, and ever after that, Sim always went into his mother's room before he went to bed. He could not get over that boyish habit.

He was thinking of his mother now as he sat in the church. Somehow the church suggested his mother.

The author puts it in two sentences in close juxtaposition:

"He was alone in the church . . ." "Immediately he began to think of his mother."

One needs to make no comment on that juxtaposition. It speaks for itself. It preaches its own sermon. It throws out its own challenge to all mothers of this day. It hurls its own terrible indictment to the flapper-mother; the neglectful mother; the wickedly careless mother.

"He was alone in the church. . . . Immediately he began to think of his mother."

In the church came back the old question as he unconsciously slipped to his knees in the attitude of prayer: "Why am I spared?"

He remembered, as he knelt there a certain night in

the dugout when he had talked to his mother. He never felt that he was having a proper talk with his mother unless he was kneeling. He had knelt so often at her knees and beside her bed. "Mother, *why* am I spared? Mother, *why* am I spared?" That plaintive, wistful cry came back again to him as he knelt in the church, came back just as it had in the dugout of France: "Mother, *why* am I spared?"

Then suddenly, as he knelt in the church he remembered how that strange answer had come to him in the dugout that night as he knelt to talk with his mother.

" 'Mother, *why* am I spared?'

"And immediately he felt within him one of those astonishing, unexpected, inexpressibly comforting acquisitions of absolute *knowledge* to which those other messages from her belonged.

"Immediately following his cry to her, alone in that dark and airless dugout, he had within him the absolute knowledge that, through those perilous years and among those thousands more fitted and more worthy who had fallen and who yet would fall, he had been spared, and would be spared, because he had been selected, reserved, set apart, for an especial purpose."

That was it!

As he knelt in the church, this dugout memory all came back with renewed reality. The great question was answered. There was a certain purpose for which he was spared.

It is a beautiful thought that this great answer to his question came back to him in the church, while he was on his knees, with the memory of his mother

about him. I wonder what message and meaning that scene will have for this day?

"He was alone in the church . . . Immediately he began to think of his mother."

THE CHANGE

When this question of why he had been spared through the war was settled in his soul, a great change came over Sim's life. As we have seen, he quit the army.

He was large, strong, athletic, good-looking, and a social favourite in London during the war, as he had been in college. He found that he did not care for these flimsy affairs of life.

"In the old days, he would have been in his element in these affairs. He found now that he cared for none of these things."

He used to like the army life, its ease, its social distinctions, the adulation of women, its junketings. But after the great question had been answered for him in the dugout, there was a great change in his soul. The author puts it this way:

"And then on a day his thoughts went a plunge that was a great plunge deeper. He suddenly thought: 'But these junketings, I used to revel in them; this regimental routine, I used to love it. Why don't I now? I believe there is something in me that is changing me. I believe I shall never settle to this again. I believe I have got to get out of this, GOT to!'"

One is reminded of the young lawyer in Tolstoy's "The Resurrection." He hated those things which he

had been. One is reminded of the prizefighter in Masefield's "The Everlasting Mercy." One is reminded of Mary Magdalene in the great book of that name by Edgar Saltus: "She dropped her past from her as a garment that was stained."

That is what always happens when one gets a glimpse of a great purpose in human life.

"I believe that there is something in me that is changing me. I believe I shall never settle to this again. I believe I have got to get out of this, *got to!*"

One does have to climb when one gets into the hole of sin—the deep, airless, senseless, dark, dismal dug-out of sin. One never gets very far in spiritual climbing until a question comes over his soul, and into his living. He learns to question life, and then a change comes, and he knows that never again can he settle back into the old hole of life and living. He has just GOT to climb!

That "change" in his life manifests itself in other ways. He begins to yearn for sympathy; for souls that understand this questioning and this change which has come over his life.

And beautifully enough, and naturally enough, when this desire for sympathy comes to him, he begins to give sympathy and understanding to others:

"This was, for the first time in his life, a desire for sympathy; and himself desiring sympathy, he began to observe and to reflect upon the need for sympathy that was to be seen on every side, in every care-worn face, in every newspaper report

of strikes, of unemployment, of misery, of want, of passion."

He began to understand, and to try to understand, labour and its problems.

He began to try to understand with sympathy the problems of youth.

He gave a sympathy to his brothers, Charles and Andrew, which he had never felt before; and to their wives, Alice, the girl who was carrying on a false alliance with a young doctor, and Linda, the spirited, the pampered, the frivolous. They all felt this new sympathy in Sim, and trusted him, and leaned on him, and loved him for it.

He vowed never to condemn others again; only to understand and to pity.

"I say that there is no human story, no case as presented by the man who has lived it, which, if we look at it not with the eyes of the multitude, but with the eyes of the Good Samaritan, paused to stoop and look deeper, is not a case for infinite compassion. The worse the case, the more the pity. The worse a man's case, the more he should be judged, not by what he is, but by what he might have been; not backwards from what he has become, but forwards from where he started. There only would be pity then; no censure. For we all came trailing clouds of glory at our start."

So when comes the questioning of life; and so when comes this change in life, comes pity and sympathy for all humanity. No purposeless life knows compassion or pity. First comes the question as to *why* we live. Then

comes the change. Then comes pity and compassion for all humanity.

THE SEARCH

Sim knows there is a purpose for him. Now comes the search for that purpose for which he has been spared.

Sim loved Elizabeth. She was a girl he had met on a furlough during war days. She had served also. Then he found her, after the search for that purpose had begun. She understood when he told her all of the story. She too had a purpose. She was paying off a debt of honour which her father, a lawyer, had contracted. He had lost the inheritance of a poor woman by bad investments and then had died. Elizabeth had felt that she must earn the money to pay that debt of honour. They could not marry until she had fulfilled her purpose. Sim found her again at this crisis in each of their lives. He told her all; the scene in the dugout; the prayer hour in the sanctuary of the church; the memory of his mother; the feeling that he had been spared for a purpose; the change that had come over his life.

As Sim talked, leaning against the wall of her room in the glow of an open fire-place she remembered a painting.

"It came to her. It was the painting by Watts of the man who from the bidding to the service of Christ turned away, 'for he had great possessions!'

"She caught her breath.

" 'Sim!'

He looked back.

"Sim, there is a purpose for you. I know it. I am convinced of it!"

His smile, questioning her, was pale, wan, scarcely a smile.

"Sim I believe that it is of God!"

Here was a soul that understood. What a glorious foundation for everlasting human love: understanding. How many homes are smashed, like a leaking ship, on the rocks of hopelessness because of this lack.

Elizabeth understood because she, too, had a purpose; because she too, had questioned life; because she too had suffered. Sim's heart was bound to hers forever because she understood. Whether they married or not, she was his woman and he was her man. That was enough. He turned to her, with a great, lonely cry, in answer to her understanding heart.

"Elizabeth, I sometimes have an uncanny, frightened feeling that God is *after* me!"

Here is the heart of the book:

"Elizabeth, I sometimes have an uncanny, frightened feeling that God is *after* me!"

Sim was right. God was after him. God works in strange and mysterious ways His wonders to perform. He sits back amid the shadows keeping watch above His own. He has His plans and His destinies, and His servants to do them. He has His commissions. He is *after* us all.

Sim was right because that sense of having been spared for some purpose had come over him in the dugout that night, and had been re-affirmed in the church that afternoon at sunset when he knelt in prayer and his mother's presence had enveloped him. Sim was

right that God was after him because a question came into his soul, and then, after that questioning, came a great change.

"Elizabeth, I sometimes have an uncanny, frightened feeling that God is *after* me!"

That feeling comes to us all, and we rise to climb, or we sink to death!

When such a call comes, the feeling that God is after us, as William Allen White says: "We rise and shine, and take up our journey to the stars," or we sink back into mud and scum and filth and hell.

No wonder Elizabeth thought of Watts' great painting of the rich young man who turned sorrowfully away. I have seen that painting in the Tate Gallery in London, and it is the saddest picture ever painted by the brush of man. As the profile of that rich young man, with his luxurious flowing gown, swishes to one side, and he turns away from Christ's Eternal Glory, there is a touch of unutterable pathos and everlasting tragedy. It is an old Greek tragedy put into a painting. "For he had great riches."

When a man, or a boy, or a girl, these days, feels that God is after him, that is a high and holy hour in his life. That is a "Giant Hour."

"I wish that I had learned by heart
Some lyrics read that day;
I knew not 'twas a Giant Hour
That soon would pass away."

God pity the soul who turns away from that hour for any reason.

God pity the soul which fails to heed that call to

walk amid the stars with God, which was expressed in those regnant words:

"Elizabeth, I sometimes have an uncanny, frightened feeling that God is *after* me!"

THE ACCEPTANCE

Sim had questioned life.

He had a strange feeling that there was a purpose for him. He had known that change which comes into a human soul when one feels that there is a purpose in life. He had searched for that purpose until he had found that it came from God. Now he must accept that purpose.

There is a difference between seeing a purpose and accepting it. The Watts' painting illustrates that difference. One may turn away from a purpose. The rich young man did.

Sim did not want to turn away from it. He wanted to accept it. But he wanted to understand it fully. Understanding was a part of accepting to him. He felt that he did not understand it yet. The process of understanding and accepting comes now.

He left London and went north to a little village to be alone and think. He left Linda and her social frivolities. He left London and its whirl; its hurly-burly. He wanted to go into the wilderness to fast and think. No clear, settled understanding of any purpose of life comes without this great wilderness experience.

He found an old simple-hearted couple living in this village. The old man was blind. He got lodging with them for a few months to be alone.

These two old folks were brother and sister. They were simple Christian folk. The sister told him about her brother :

“ ‘My Yeoman is blind,’ she said softly.

“ ‘That is sad,’ replied Sim.

“ ‘And has been twenty year daily ever since this lightness came over him.’ ”

Sim smiles at her use of this term “lightness.” She meant of course darkness. But the woman disabused him of that thought as she went on :

“She smiled, ‘ ‘Tis his custom of saying it. Affliction he will not have it called, nor darkness neither ; my Yeoman. His eyes were opened when his eyes were closed, he says.’ She touched the Braille gospel : ‘Meaning of that, of God, sir,’ she said.”

He was beginning, was Sim, to understand his purpose now, and to accept it. Here was the first step. This blind man talked of his blindness as “When the light came,” meaning God. He was beginning to understand now.

Then after a few weeks he learned that the old blind Yeoman was making benches. For what purpose ? To place them on the hillsides above the five factories of the little village so that weary workmen might sit on them and rest after their hill climb. Getting money for it ? No. Just doing it. Why ? “On account of God !” That was all.

“ ‘My work for the weary ones,’ he said. ‘And then maybe I shall climb my hill.’ ”

The old Yeoman carved on these seats :

"Rest, passer-by, then cheerily on ;
Peace on thy habitation, passer-by."

Every night Yeoman read his Braille gospel. It was a happy family custom to find three messages for himself and three for his sister each evening before he went to bed. One evening Sim said playfully, "You had better find me a message, Yeoman."

It was Yeoman's habit to run a knife in between the pages and read whatever message his fingers alighted upon. Tonight for Sim—for Simon—he read by chance: "Simon . . . him they compelled to bear his cross."

Sim—Simon—was beginning to understand and to accept his purpose now. This time in the wilderness was bearing glorious fruit.

Then one evening at sunset he walked in the woods. Then came what this author calls "The Light."

There was a glowing and a glorious path of light. He was riding. He found himself at the foot of a long rise. At the top of the hill the sky was deeply black where it touched the horizon. Above that flushed rose and gold. Midway to the horizon drifted a long, thin trail of grey the faintest gleam of silver white. A phrase leapt into his soul:

"Something behind it all! Something behind it all! Something behind it all."

As he sat on his horse looking into this picture, he remembered a conversation that he and Yeoman had had the night before; that artists expressed them-

selves in colours, in words, in stone: why not in wood.

Yeoman had replied: "In wood? It hath been done, sir; aye, mightiest expression of a man ever the world knew hath been in wood."

"What, Yeoman?" he had asked.

And the astounding answer: "Sir, the Cross of Christ!"

He rode to the top of that long hill. The black disappeared; a great light shone in the sky. He remembered something about a "Great Light." It was about a man named Paul—Saul—and he remembered a cry: "Saul, Saul, it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks." And Saul said, "Lord, what wilt thou have me do?"

Then suddenly that light in the sky seemed to turn into a great broad road. Sim got down from his horse and leaned his head against the saddle and trembled. It had come. What? Conversion. He was afraid of it. He did not seek it. It sought him.

Then he found himself praying aloud:

"Mother, I am your Sim, and I am frightfully unhappy. I am talking to you now, looking at that road because I have the vision that it is down a road like that, gloriously beaming, that you will come one day to meet me. Mother, I would to God it might be now, here, at this moment, because I am frightfully unhappy, Mother.

"I only want to come to you as I used to come to you, and you waiting for me. Beloved, I can see you, see you in your every line, treading down that path to take me up. 'Sim.' I can hear your voice; and I shall answer, Mother. . . ."

Then: "He seemed to have no thoughts; peace only—a great stillness—and then a prayer: 'Oh God, suffer me some truth that I can understand.' "

Then he found himself biting his lower lip. Then he released his lip and found himself saying over and over: "The guide to God!"

He was learning to understand now and ready to accept.

THE RESULT

He found himself looking for results of what this purpose would do for humanity.

He found a Christian home. They called it the K.O.H. house. In that home there was fun, and laughter, and love. It was a vivid contrast to Linda's home in London; or to the home of Charles. It was a contrast to most of the homes he knew. It was what might be called "old-fashioned." They quit dancing at midnight on Saturday. When asked why, one of the daughters, in perfect simplicity, said:

"Why, father never likes us to be frolicking into Sunday, you see."

He found that Sir Henry had the old-fashioned idea that men ought not to smoke until the women had left. This too impressed him. Sir Henry said of this:

"It is one of our old family habits, I'm afraid; we never smoke till my wife and girls have gone. It is just a little way of ours."

It was a simple thing, but it impressed Sim; that "little way of ours" in the "K.O.H. House."

Then there were family prayers in that "K.O.H. House"; in that home of wealth and culture. They who

could afford to disdain all such things chose to keep up the old and beautiful traditions.

The servants were called in for the family prayers and the visitors too. It was simple and it was beautiful. They always had family prayers in the "K.O.H. House."

Stories were being told one evening. The story was told of a writer in the group who was writing in the Alps, with no fire, and of how an old ugly peasant woman had brought him a hot brick every morning. The story teller added: "You know, I thought that was the kindest, the gentlest, action ever I had come across."

One of the girls in the "K.O.H. House" spoke up: "Why, it is more than that. It was just exactly what we call K.O.H. kindness."

Sim asked what "K.O.H. kindness" was.

"Why, K.O.H. kindnesses are the sort that spring just out of simple goodness of heart; K.O.H. kindness we always call that; Kingdom of Heaven kindness."

He went to bed. He knelt in prayer. Again came that great sense of peace which he had experienced on the hilltop when he saw "The Light." What was it? He was beginning to understand now. It was "Kingdom of Heaven" peace.

"The Kingdom of Heaven is in us all."

"He bowed himself upon the bed."

He saw evidences of this Kingdom of Heaven within people everywhere now. "Look at those people who are very fond of children, and whom all children take to; my mother, far more than anyone I have ever known, was such a one; she never could pass

a baby in the street but she must stop, and talk to it. It is, it only can be, that these people have kept that Kingdom of Heaven preserved within them."

People began to lean on Sim. He had a strange light always in his face. Death came sweeping upon the group in this book. Charles accidentally shot himself, at the very moment when Dr. Byrne was planning to run away with Alice his wife; Charles, poor, simple Charles, all unsuspecting. Then neither of them dared that great sin. All desire for such was crushed in their souls.

Sim knew the whole sin and tragedy. Was he unkind? Did he condemn? He did not. The Kingdom of Heaven had awakened in his soul. He pitied.

He said to Dr. Byrne: "Byrne, my brother Charles was very fond of you."

Byrne cried out: "God help me, Sim—everybody calls you that, Sim, forgive me—God help me, Sim, I know he was."

Alice clung to him in her sin and in her tragedy. "What gave that man Sim the look he had, the tone he spoke?"

It was the Kingdom of Heaven within him.

Alice clung to him that day for "There was something about that man that day (and ever after) that made him like a rock in time of trouble."

What was it? Alice did not know, but we know that it was the Kingdom of God within his soul.

One friend said of Sim that "He was an instrument, perfectly tuned, that would give the perfect note whatever chord was touched. In tune with the Christ within him."

Sim himself said that he had found Christ as the "Common Denominator" of all human kind. He also said: "I have found that for which men have been looking ever since the war; good God, by which, if they had found it before, there would have been no war."

Elizabeth knew when she saw him that he was what she called "Transfigured with light, caught up; and she cried out to him: "Sim, you have found your Purpose!"

Linda—beautiful Linda—was dying of smallpox. Sim was there. Linda had never had a holy thought in her life time. Sim knelt by her bed. Linda cried out: "Tell me some good stuff, Sim."

What could he tell her? It was his first test of preaching; he who was not a preacher, but who had come to his purpose of telling people about the Kingdom of Heaven within.

"Darling Linda, a prayer?"

"Sim . . . Sim . . . yes . . . a prayer. . . ."

"He said: 'Listen, darling Linda:

"Abide with me, fast falls the eventide;

The darkness deepens; Lord, with me abide.'

"She sighed.

"Listen, then, darling:

"When other helpers fail and comforts flee
Help of the helpless, O abide with me.'

"Her murmur came: 'Hand, Sim.'"

"He took her hand in both of his. 'Hold Thou Thy cross. . . .' His voice shook. He was forced to stop.

"'Hand, Sim, tell me some more good stuff!'

"'Darling, I am holding your hand! Sim has your hand. Listen, Linda, darling:

"Hold Thou Thy cross before my closing eyes;
Shine through the gloom and point me to the skies.'"

The story is over. The Kingdom of Heaven is within. Christ is the Common Denominator of all humanity; rich and poor; wise and foolish; good and bad; Linda and Alice and Elizabeth; Sim and Andrew and Charles. There is a purpose for every life.

"And I doubt not thro' the ages one increasing purpose
runs,
And the thoughts of men are widened with the process
of the suns."

CHAPTER XII

"THE POWER OF A LIE"

BY JOHAN BOJER

THE MESSAGE OF A MAN'S SIN

"But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death."—Revelation 21:8.

Liars are in a class with whoremongers and murderers.

I have read that scripture lesson over and over again and I never understood it at all until I read Bojer's "The Power of a Lie."

It always seemed to me that John in this verse, classifying liars with murderers, was speaking imagery and symbolism, and that he had carelessly slipped the liar into a class of much worse offenders.

And that a man who lied should suffer the second death, which is the death of the soul, seemed a terrible punishment to me for what looks to be a more or less universal sin.

Then I read "The Power of a Lie" and ever after that I have understood why it was that John of Patmos put the liar in the same class with the whoremonger, the idolater, the sorcerer, the abominable, the mur-

derer. It is because in that intricate and almost impenetrable and tragic series of consequences that follow upon a lie, there is everything from idolatry to murder.

The beginnings of a lie may not be so bad, but the amazing meanderings of a lie are terrible.

Bojer has written what might well be called "The Life History of a Lie" in this tremendous novel. He has followed a lie from its rather simple inception to its terrible and tragic consequences. He has shown how many people a lie affects, what homes it tears asunder, how it may upheave an entire community, and carry pestilence and murder in its pathway.

Ida M. Tarbell in recent years has written a book called "In the Footsteps of the Lincolns," and in this book she starts in England and follows the Lincolns to New England, and then to Kentucky, and then to Springfield, and then to Washington, and then to death. It is an amazing study. So Bojer might call his book "In the Footsteps of a Lie." He follows this lie from its birth to its climax in death and desolation.

In Hauptmann's "The Fool in Christ," Emanuel Quint, the Fool, is talking one day with one of his followers, Marie, and as he talks, he pours out statements that are curiously reminiscent of the New Testament, with now and then one of his own sayings mixed in. One of these sayings of his is: "Silence is sin!"

As you will see by the progress of this story of a lie, in the case of Knut Norby a silence that was sin caused havoc irrevocable in the lives of hundreds of people.

"The Power of a Lie" is like the Book of Job in some respects. It is the story of an innocent man; in

this case a man accused of forgery, who suffers and continues to suffer, whose problem is never solved; who, even in his innocence, suffers tragically.

THE LIE THAT WAS LIED

Knut Norby, a wealthy land owner, had gone on the bond of his friend Wengen. Wengen suddenly failed. Knut Norby went on this bond secretly without having told his wife that he had done so. When the news comes to him that Wengen has failed, he tries to hide the fact of his having gone on the bond, from his wife. He knows it was a mistake to have gone on the bond.

The first lie he tells over signing this note, is to his wife, Marit. She asks him outright if he is on Wengen's note, and Norby denies it. Then the daughter that he loves deeply, Ingeborg, comes in to his bed that night.

"There's something I must tell you, father," she began, softly. "When I was at the post-office today, I heard that lawyer Basting had been declaring that you would suffer too by this failure. I didn't dare to tell mother until I had spoken to you about it."

Said the father who wanted to be let alone for that night: "Poor Basting! He's always got something or other to chatter about."

And Ingeborg went away feeling that her father had not signed the note.

"I was sure it was untrue," she said to him.

It was a simple thing. He had not lied in words but he had lied in spirit to his dearest daughter. He had evaded the question. He had given an indirect answer.

That is the psychology of the whole thing. It starts out so simply, but it ends up so tragically. It is like all lies. If he had spoken the truth at first, he might have saved much suffering and misery for himself, for his sons and daughters, for his home, for poor miserable Wengen, and for Mrs. Wengen.

The third person to whom Norby lied was to one of his men who was interested in the case. When Norby got up the next morning late and went out into the farm yard, one of his men came up to him asking whether it was true that Wengen had forged somebody's signature to his note.

"It would be very like him if he had," said Norby.

As he walked around the farm, the same question was put to him over and over, and before the morning was through, he found himself telling the servants that it was his opinion that Wengen had forged his signature to that note if it was on the note; all the time knowing in his soul that he had signed the note for the man in a moment of weakness.

His wife suspects Norby of actually having signed the note for Wengen, so she insists that he go to the Justice and swear that Wengen forged his signature. She finally forces her husband to do this thing, and one more step in his tragic weakness is taken.

THE CONSEQUENCES OF NORBY'S LIE IN HIS OWN SOUL

Wengen's face began to haunt Norby. The man he had wronged was always in his consciousness. He could not get away from Wengen's face. It was like a ghost after him night and day.

He went up to a mountain side where his men were hauling lumber. He heard workmen shouting and horses neighing. As he got there, he saw one of his best horses sit down on its haunches and slide down a steep incline. Horse and load slid down this steep hillside. This was madness. He started toward the hillside with his whip. It was Wengen's face looked out at him from the driver's place.

Another load came down that steep hill, with his best horses sliding on their haunches—and again it was Wengen's face, the driver's. Load after load came tumbling down that hillside, his horses sliding on their haunches, the load of heavy lumber tumbling about them. Norby was fiercely angry at such carelessness; such misuse of his horses; and when he raised his whip to strike the driver—lo, each driver's face was that of Wengen, the man whom he had wronged.

And each time that leering face of Wengen spoke: "You're trying to tax me with forgery, Norby, but how about your own affairs?"

Norby raised his whip to strike Wengen, but another load appeared at the top of the steep incline and started down. The driver of that load cried, with a maniac's laugh:

"You're trying to tax me with forgery, Norby, but ha! ha! ha!—what about yourself?"

The old man had fallen asleep on his sofa and had dreamed it all. But when he arose from the couch he said: "I must do something—I must get away from this!"

He went out into his barnyard. He liked to look at

his stock. There was no greater pleasure he had than to look at his stock.

"Things are beginning to go wrong with me!" he said. "I'll go out and look at my stock!"

Things always begin to go wrong with the man who lies viciously and maliciously.

"Oh what a tangled web we weave
When first we practice to deceive!"

is an old copy-book sentence that we shall never forget. "Honesty is the best policy" is another one.

Norby was beginning to see that he had woven a terribly tangled web when he lied about Wengen and the note.

So do we all of us when we practise the sin of silence! To remain silent when one knows the truth that will keep another from harm, is as great a sin as murder often times, because that very silence may result in murder.

Norby went out to see his stock. He came first to the pigpens. A pig put his snout out through the bars. He suddenly drew back from that pig's snout: "My God! It is Wengen!" And the old man almost ran from that pen in terror.

The author says: "A shudder ran through him and he hastened out, and from a kind of curiosity went through the cow-shed."

He had hardly stepped inside the cow-shed when an innocent-looking cow, chewing her cud, looked up at him, then a second, then a third; and each had the face of Wengen.

"Ugh!" cried Norby. "You great idiot, to imagine things like that!"

"Even his dog, Hector, began to look timidly at him, as if he too, suspected something." . . . "When he was driving he thought that the horses did not go willingly either, as if they too had a suspicion; and he used the whip more than ever; and drove recklessly . . ."

He noticed that his men did not seem to have the old fear and respect for him that they formerly had. That lie was getting out of his soul into the animals and into his men. He knew it. He could feel it. People all around him were angry with him; they suspected him; they hated him. And again he said to himself: "Things are beginning to go wrong with me!"

Then he began to drink heavily, and one evening his wife Marit was astonished to find him asleep, dead drunk, as she came into his room where the tobacco smoke still hung heavily.

"She peeped cautiously in, and saw that the old man had sunk back on to the sofa, and was asleep, with his glass in his hand."

Norby had now come to the place where in his own soul the "Power of a Lie" was crushing him down to the earth, haunting him at every step he took.

The time of the inquiry was approaching, and the nearer that hour came, the more the fever of anxiety caused by his lie surged through his body and his soul, shooting his mental and spiritual temperature up until it was burning him up with fear and reproach.

He got so he could not sleep at night. He excused that sleeplessness to his wife by saying: "I'm beginning to feel my rheumatism again."

Everywhere he felt a sense of suspicion; of impend-

ing doom about him, as if something was about to fall on him. He felt as if something was about to explode. He felt as if some impending calamity was about to burst in terrible fury as the day of the inquiry drew near. He had already lied. He had, in addition to that, signed a paper saying that Wengen had forged his signature to that note—when he knew in his own soul that he had signed it himself. He did not know whether he could keep his face straight; whether he could continue that lie as he looked into Wengen’s face.

“It occurred to him that there was a suspicious stillness over the countryside, in spite of what he had done, a stillness as if someone were lying in wait for him.”

The night after this thought, this sense of someone lying in wait for him, came to him, he suddenly turned to his wife and said: “Isn’t it strange that we human beings, who may die at any moment, should pass all our time in doing evil to others?”

What a plaintive cry that is, and how it applies to human life universally:

“Isn’t it strange that we human beings, who may die at any moment, should pass all of our time in doing evil to others?”

What a world of happiness it would be if we human beings should start in tomorrow:

Trying to find the good in others to talk about, rather than the bad!

Trying to search out the commendable things, rather than the mistakes!

Trying to find the lovely things, rather than the unlovely things!

Trying to seek out those things which will give us a chance to commend, rather than to criticize!

"Isn't it strange that we human beings, who may die at any moment, should pass all of our time in doing evil to others?"

Recently I got a wire that a friend was found dead in his garage in New York City. He was one of my best friends, one of the most charming fellows who ever lived on earth. In the prime of life, with lovely children and a beautiful wife, full of ambition, and a sun-lit future, he passed out.

The next day I got a paper telling about another friend's death. Who was he? A young preacher. His daughter is in the Deaconess Training School. He was one of the most loving and lovely men I ever knew and the world seems suddenly to stand still. It isn't believable that he is dead.

Last July I heard Stuart Sherman talk in Colorado Springs. He is the author of several books. He was the editor of the *New York World's Book Magazine*. Within a week after I saw him he had drowned in an Illinois Lake. It doesn't seem possible that this brilliant man is dead.

"Isn't it strange that we human beings, who may die at any moment, should pass all of our time in doing evil to others?"

God pity us for our selfishness!

WHAT HAPPENED TO OTHERS BECAUSE OF THE LIE

This is the terrible thing about this book, to see what happened to others because a man lied. If I were

using a Symphonic Theme in connection with this dramatic book sermon it would be that old copy-book couplet I have already quoted :

"Oh what a tangled web we weave
When first we practice to deceive!"

This web began to weave itself about Norby, as we have seen, until it penetrated his soul and body and life. But the terrible tragedy about this lie and all lies and all sin, is that it weaves itself about the lives of others like the great arms of an octopus, and chokes them to death.

There is a great and a terrible parasitic vine in the Philippines which climbs up as an innocent-looking green vine, as delicate as a shoot of bamboo, which the natives eat for a salad. But after a time, that delicate green shoot becomes hard and strong and tough as it climbs up the trunk of that melitus tree until it chokes the life out of that tree, although it is a great, strong tree to begin with, which has stood for hundreds of years.

So a lie will start as a tiny green shoot, a thing so delicate and tender and seemingly harmless that it looks as if it could not injure anything. But it gets larger and tougher and stronger, and finally it not only chokes the soul out of the man who started it, but it also chokes the soul and the lives of others.

So does this terrible vine of the tropics spread itself from tree to tree until it has propagated itself and wrapped itself about a hundred trees. Finally, it will creep over and through and around an entire forest until it is impossible to penetrate that jungle

of vines, and it will choke the life out of every living tree in that forest.

That is exactly what happened with this lie. It not only choked the soul out of Norby, but it spread its terrible talons until it took in hundreds of individuals, an entire countryside, a Labour Union—and crushed them all.

The fact that this story ends beautifully and that Norby is banqueted at its end; and that the village hails him as hero, and sends Wengen to prison, does not change the face that the lie choked his soul and crushed the spiritual lives of all of those who were within its reach.

Of course it crushed Wengen, against whom the lie was told. Within a few months his business was in the hands of a receiver, his home broken, and he in prison. But perhaps the most tragic figure of the book is that of Fra Wengen; a noble, patient woman; a woman who had known culture and ease. She was about to have a baby when this tragedy fell upon her, but she bravely stuck to her husband. Sleepless nights came, and the baby was born, and finally died because of the terror that was in the mother's heart over her husband's trouble. The mother's milk poisoned the baby. Finally, Fra Wengen had to let all of her children go and break up her home and live in a hovel, where the winds howled through at night, and there was neither food nor shelter.

The terribly cruel penalties that this lie imposed upon the Wengen family alone are enough to wring tears from the heart of the reader.

Fra Wengen's father was found one day hanging

to the end of a rope in an old barn, because of his grief over the loss of his money, his life's savings, which he had loaned to Wengen, and which, if Norby's note had been acknowledged and paid, would have saved him.

We think that these things do not happen, and yet, just the other day, a son-in-law was shot to death in Boonville, Missouri, by a teacher who had invested his life's savings in an investment company that the father-in-law of this boy had sponsored.

The son-in-law had nothing at all to do with the failure. He was the father of three little children. He was just beginning life. He was merely in the office trying to straighten things out as fairly as he could, when this poor, mentally distracted school teacher, an invalid, came back from California and shot the son-in-law, who was as innocent as the demented teacher himself of a part in the crime.

But perhaps the worst thing that happened as a result of Norby's lie was that he made a coward and a liar out of his own son, whom he loved more than life itself, he thought.

Einar Norby had been off to school, but he heard about the trouble with Wengen. He remembered that one day his father had called him into his room and had told him about signing this very note for Wengen. And now he was denying it. He was sending a man to prison as a forger. He must have forgotten that he had signed that note.

But when Einar got home he found out that his father had not really forgotten. He was lying about it for some reason which the boy could not guess. He

remembered that his father had cautioned the boy about telling the mother of his having gone on Wengen's note.

There was a terrible scene when the boy reminded his father that he had told him of signing that note. At first the father tried to make the son believe that he had dreamed that tale. Then he became angry when the son insisted that he must go to the trial and tell the truth. The father raised his fist as if to strike him. He was angry enough to have killed his own son.

Einar fought it out in his own soul!

"It seemed to take him by the throat. There appeared to be no choice between the two things—either to be a coward, or to bring unhappiness upon all those he loved!"

The day of the trial came. Einar went into the court room. But he lost his own soul. He dared not bring unhappiness on his mother and sister and father. He turned coward. The pressure was too much for him. He was faced with the alternative of either being a coward or betraying his own guilty father. Who can say what any of us would have done?

He found himself the day of the trial running out of the court-room like a coward. He forgot that he had taken neither his coat nor his hat and it was a raw, cold day. Pneumonia set in. For months he hovered near death. His father never came near his room, although they told the boy that night after night his father had paced his own room, sleepless and suffering.

But the most terrible thing about this part of "The Power of a Lie" was that when Einar was at his

worst Norby actually found himself wishing that he would not get well again, for his own son was the only man, so far as he knew, whom he had actually told about signing the note.

"‘Oh, dear,’ he thought, ‘I do hope that Einar will pull through.’ But the terrible thing was that sometimes he caught himself wishing that he would not pull through. Thoughts like these buzzed about like stinging wasps on the surface of his mind."

One night he knew that Einar was low. It was a terrible night, and he ought to go for the doctor. He put off going. He knew in his own soul that he wanted Einar to die. He stood in his room looking off toward the west at the red and black banks of clouds. Then he found himself repeating over and over to his own soul, as red with shame and as black with sin as those clouds:

"Supposing Einar died and went over there. There he would stand for ever and ever, always looking at him as he had done that day at the court-house. He would see that form night and day as long as ever he lived. Always this accusation from the dead."

He went for the doctor. After weeks and months Einar got well. He had never been in Einar's room. Einar did not want to see him. The father in his guilty soul did not want to enter that sick boy's room. But the sister and mother brought them together, and when the father knelt at his son's bed, they both wept, and Norby cried out:

"Heaven be praised! Thank God that I have got my boy back again!"

But the tragedy of it all was, that he had not got

his boy back again. He had got back a mere shadow of his boy. He had got back a coward and a quitter, and he knew it. He had done more than kill his son's body. He had killed his son's soul!

THE TRUTH THAT THIS BOOK TEACHES HUMANITY

Hall Caine, in introducing this book to its readers, says that the first truth it teaches is:

(1) *That an evil act is irrevocable!*

Again I quote the old copy-book couplet:

"Oh, what a tangled web we weave
When first we practice to deceive!"

The very ending of this book is an illustration of this principle. Wengen is sent to the penitentiary. His home is broken up. The baby dies. It is a pathetic moment when the pastor of the village calls on Wengen. The pastor has taken Norby's side because he is a rich land-holder, and poor Wengen suffers alone. When the pastor steps into Wengen's home, he sees a worn, emaciated man step into the room. The clock is ticking.

"'Our little baby died last night,' he said, when he had seated himself. 'It was undoubtedly because of his mother's milk. She has had too much to bear lately!'"

That little baby, dead because of its mother's worry over the punishment of her innocent husband—so helpless—that mother—with her dead baby in her arms—poisoned by her own milk—because she had had too much to bear lately! That dead child is a symbol of the fact that an evil act is irrevocable.

A man sped down Linwood Boulevard in a car a

while ago. Brother Pearl, as fine a Christian spirit as ever lived, stepped out of prayer meeting. That drunken driver sent him into Eternity. When they got to the driver, he had fainted. But that fainting will not bring Brother Pearl back.

A drunken driver drove down East Jefferson in Detroit, and sent a beautiful young boy, less than twenty, to death. Nothing can bring that boy back. That act of evil is irrevocable!

The fact that this author ends his book happily does not fool the thoughtful person. The fact that the book ends with all the cards set against the innocent Wengen; and that the countryside gives Norby a banquet, and that Norby himself feels a sense of quiet elation and vindication, does not fool us—nor did it fool him. Life was still to be lived. Norby's story did not end with that banquet. Norby still had innumerable days ahead to look upon skies that were red and black; red with treachery and black with sin. He still had innumerable midnight hours alone. He still had Death to face, and Eternity, and God the Just!

Says the author:

"No a wicked act is a thing that is set in motion, and perhaps never stops. In appears in consequences, and the consequences of these consequences; it spreads like an infectious disease, and no one knows when or how it will cease."

(2) *No penitence can wipe out the consequences of an evil act.*

For a long time, we of the Christian Church have emphasized the doctrine of a selfish thought; that

every man may be forgiven for his sins. We have talked glibly of that man's duty to go and make his sin right. We have spoken of death-bed repentances. That is possible.

But what we have not preached, and what we ought to be preaching, is the eternal and terrible truth that no penitence, no matter how sincere that penitence may be, can wipe out the consequences of an evil act.

The world is full of suffering caused by the sins of untold generations, for which the sinners may have been forgiven, but the sin goes on "unto the third and fourth generation," and little children with deformed backs and twisted limbs live and suffer.

This is a theme that Bojer briefly touches upon in "Treacherous Ground." It is all summed up in that verse which I quoted in that sermon:

"Boys flying kites haul in their white-winged birds;
But you can't do that when you're flying words.
Words unuttered, may sometimes fall back dead,
But God Himself can't stop them when they're said!"

So it is with sin. You may repent, you may try to atone—but the sin goes on; the innocent suffer for untold generations; and the punishment of sin is this consciousness.

The best way to master evil is not to commit evil. The best way to conquer sin is to have nothing to do with it. A sin unsinned, an evil not committed, is never the master of any soul.

There is always an hour when a sin may be made right. That hour is in the beginning before it has had a chance to spread and choke and crush; before it gets its power.

That chance came to Norby when he entered the door of the court-room to swear to the lie that Wengen had forged his signature to the note:

"As his hand touched the handle of the door a far-off voice seemed to say, 'Turn back! There is still time!' But the voice was far too distant!"

Again he heard that voice. It was when he came out of the court-room after his examination was over.

"There was a voice far away, crying: 'You have lied! You have lied!' But it was too far away!"

CHAPTER XIII

"PRINCESS SALOME"

BY BURRIS JENKINS

THE SPIRITUAL POWER OF JESUS

"Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?"—Acts 9:1 to 12.

There have been many stories of Salome written. Some of them have been done with licentiousness and lust; some of them with spiritual tenderness and a sympathetic understanding of the character and the meaning of the story. Dr. Burris Jenkins has written such a book. When one is considering a group of books under the general title of "Some Books of Yesterday as Antidotes to some Books of Today," he could hardly leave this one out.

It is the story of a vision, a renunciation, and a Christ.

It is the story of Christ and His relationships with humanity; His influence on certain strangely and widely differing types of humanity. It is the story of how certain people followed the King, in spite of themselves, and what happened to their lives—the transformation that came into them—through following this lowly man of Nazareth; namely Eleazar, who is known to us as Lazarus; Maria, who is Mary; Stephanus who

later became Stephen; Mary Magdalene; Shaoul who later became Paul; Gomar and the Centurion.

Dr. Jenkins deals with this fascinating group of people in this book. Their prototypes may also be found today in human life; and you and I have seen them everywhere.

THE VISION

The story starts with the Vision.

Three boys, Shaoul, Stephanus and Gomar are approaching the city of Antioch, "second city of the world." It is dawn and the sunlight shines on her towers and minarets and domes with resplendent grandeur and glory. It is a sublime thing to see and it thrills the youthful souls of these three boys wandering over the earth in search of adventure. The five white bridges of this beautiful city look like the five white toes of some heathen queen. This woman city's body lies like a reclining queen in all her oriental splendour.

Perfume of rose and orange swept over them from the distance of half a mile, and Stephanus declared that the maidens of the queen were pouring perfume on her feet. That was their first material vision on that dawning.

The second vision was a vision of a beautiful woman. This time it was no symbolic vision, such as their first sight of the city. At the Stadium, Stephanus, who was an athlete, paused to watch the charioteers, and as he paused he heard a beautiful girl talking with a man. She was deploring the fact that she had no

athlete to run for her. Stephanus heard her complaint, and bowed his knee before her and cried out:

"Will the Princess Salome allow me to run for her? I am Stephanus of Tarsus. I can run!"

This is the second physical vision that Stephanus has had that morning, and it was a splendid vision and a beautiful lure. This dream-woman had captured his soul on sight. She was all that an oriental girl could be. Stephanus gave his body and his soul to her keeping at once.

But these two visions were material visions. Another was to come.

Shaoul had heard of Jesus the Messiah, and he tries to win Stephanus to the King. He takes him to an old man, Balthazar. This old man is known far and wide as an old man who had once followed a strange star to the foot of a hill in a village of Judea, where he and three other wise men had found a little child who was said to be the Messiah the Jews had been looking for.

Shaoul took Stephanus to see this old man in Antioch the first night of their arrival, after Stephanus had promised the Princess Salome that he would be her champion and would run for her.

They talked all night and watched the skies all night for that star which Balthazar had followed so many years ago to a stable and a cradle in a manger. Toward dawn the old man suddenly arose, walked out of the tent across the roof of the housetop, stood gazing into the heavens—stood motionless for what seemed ages—and then turned and beckoned to the boys.

"Shaoul is right, my son. You should go with him. Do you see that star? It is His star. There is a King in Israel. I have seen him. There is a King! Go to Him! Go!"

There is the world's greatest commission. There is the world's supreme adventure; the adventure of following the star to the king. That is an adventure to challenge youth and old age. That is the world's supreme urge; the urge to follow the King.

"There is a King in Israel! I have seen him!"

There is testimony that all your science cannot refute and all your differences of opinion cannot confuse. That is an answer to all arguments. "It ain't understandin', Sir, it's believin'," said little Glad in "The Dawn of a Tomorrow."

"There is a King in Israel! I have seen him!" was the testimony of old Balthazar, one of the Three Wise Men who had followed the star, and this testimony won Stephanus to Jesus, and he turned to his friend Shaoul and cried out with the beautiful impetuosity of Youth:

"I will go, Shaoul, I will go. I will go and meet the King! Shaoul, I will die for the King. I feel the blood surging through me. My head is now clear; my neck is strong. I am ready. When shall we go to meet Him?"

The great vision had come to Stephanus.

It is like the vision that came to his friend Shaoul and Maria that glorious night on the caravan journey from Antioch to Jerusalem. Shaoul had fallen in love

with little Maria, the sister of the rich merchant, Eleazar. They camped one evening, and Shaoul and Maria went alone to the summit of a hill overlooking the beautiful valley of the Jordan, with a far upward reach of the starry skies. As they stood there that night, Shaoul told Maria about the star of the King, which Balthazar had pointed out to Stephanus and himself from the housetop.

"Oh, oh, oh," cried Maria, clapping her hands. "I know all about the Messiah. Do you think He will come soon?"

"Aye, He is not far away," said Shaoul gravely. "That is His star yonder."

"Oh, which?" gasped the child, awestruck.

"That blue one, so bright, there hanging over Jerusalem. I have thought it changed colour as I gazed at it. The blue is for His royal triumph, the white for His spotless goodness, the yellow for His golden glory, and the red—"

"The red is for blood," whispered the little Maria. "Oh, the red is for blood."

"I suppose blood must be shed," acquiesced Shaoul. "He must overthrow the Romans!"

So came the vision to this adventuring group. First, the vision of the Oriental Queen city, Antioch, with all of its materialistic splendour. Then the vision of Princess Salome, a beautiful girl, ravishing in her allurements, particularly for Stephanus who had promised to run her race for her. Then came the vision to both Stephanus and Shaoul of the coming of the King. They had each promised to follow that King. They had seen His star. It had been pointed out to them by the

old Wise Man, Balthazar. Shaoul had in turn pointed it out to Little Maria. But to Shaoul it was a material kingdom that was coming; a King who would overthrow the Romans. To Stephanus it was a spiritual Kingdom. About this difference hinges the plot and the problem of this book and of human life.

THE RENUNCIATION

There always had to be renunciation to follow the King.

That is the very heart of religion. He who is not willing to renounce cannot follow the King. A while ago we saw in the Tate Gallery that wonderful painting by Watts. I have it before me now. It is the picture of the Rich Young Man who came to Jesus asking what he should do to be saved. After Jesus had told him that he must observe the Jewish laws, he said:

"All this I have done from the beginning of my life."

Then Jesus said: "Go sell that thou hast and give to the poor, and come and follow me."

The young man turned sorrowfully away, and that is the saddest story in human history; and Watts has caught that boy just as he turned. His back is half toward us. His rich robe falls from his shoulder in crimson and gold. A turban of oriental splendour is wrapped about his head. His head and chin have fallen on his breast as he turns away. The title of the picture is "For He Had Great Possessions."

Such necessity of renunciation we have illustrated by the same painting in "One Increasing Purpose." He was not willing to renounce these great possessions.

He had never heard in his soul of souls what Joaquin Miller said a while ago:

"All you can take in your cold dead hands
Is what you have given away."

No man can follow Jesus who is not willing to make the great renunciation of self and selfishness. If that renunciation means the giving up of one's money, as it often means, that is the first test of a man's discipleship. No man can refuse to renounce his earthly possessions and follow Jesus. That is the first great test.

Stephanus, the night before his decision to go with Shaoul, had been assaulted on the streets of Antioch, and he wanted revenge before he left the city. It was hard to give up this desire to seek out his enemy and kill him, for he knew who that enemy was. But he knew also that he must give up that thought of revenge. It was then that he cried out:

"I will go, Shaoul! I will go! I will go and meet the King. Shaoul, I will die for the King!"

Stephanus also had to make another renunciation. That was the renunciation of the beautiful Princess Salome.

The day of the great race had come. He was carrying the jewel of the Princess. He was winning the race easily, when suddenly the horses in Salome's chariot became frightened and ran away with this beautiful Princess in danger of her life. Stephanus left the race course and saved the Princess from death. He won her heart. But she was still confined to her couch when Shaoul was ready to go in search of the King. Stephanus knew he must leave Salome, and

that was the hard part. Salome loved him, and knew that her part also must be renunciation. So when he came she said:

"You go tomorrow to seek your King?"

"I was to have gone. I do not know—you—you—"

"Mind me not," she said, "your duty is to your king. If I live, I shall doubtless follow!"

No woman who is worthy the love of a man will be willing to make any renunciation that he may do his duty. And, thank God, womanhood has always known how to do that thing magnificently and gloriously. The womanhood of the world has taught the world what renunciation really means. Woman's life from childhood to the grave is one long trail of renunciation. Because she has learned that great spiritual victory, she has come to be the great spiritual beacon light of the earth.

THE CHRIST AND A GROUP OF HUMAN BEINGS OF HIS DAY AND WHAT HIS CONTACT WITH THEM MEANT

There was Maria (Mary).—

The pilgrimage from Antioch had gone as far as Nazareth. Maria and Shaoul, who loved each other, were in that caravan; Stephanus was there. He had left Princess Salome behind. Eleazar, the rich young prince, was the head of the caravan. Eleazar we know as Lazarus. His sister was Maria. They had reached the little village of Nazareth and it was pouring rain. The members of the caravan were uncomfortable, unhappy, and complaining, for they were wet and cold.

Came the sound of crooning from the distance. Came a young man in His bare feet. He was also bare-headed. His face was not shining with rain but it was shining with something better than rain. His purple black hair and beard were made bright with this celestial light.

It was Jeshua the Nazarene.

Greetings brief and friendly, and He walked on to the edge of the cliff and stood looking down over the valley of Esdraelon. Shaoul took his place beside the young Nazarene and the two of them looked out toward Carmel, Tabor and the distant Mediterranean Sea. Then the sun suddenly broke through the clouds and cast a circle of brilliance about the two young men. Then Shaoul noticed that the young Carpenter and His adze cast the shadow of a cross on the ground.

Maria, thinking of what the rain would do to her clothes, said:

"Everything we have will be a colourless mass in the morning. Not a thing will be fit to wear."

Jesus: "But see where the flowers of the field will come. So then, young maiden, consider the lilies, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin; yet Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. Why take ye thought for raiment? Be not anxious for the morrow; for the morrow shall be anxious for itself."

Maria was entranced. The others were spell-bound by this voice and those words. Maria was the first to speak. She felt strangely drawn to this Youth. "Sir, abide with us. Eat with us. Be our guest."

"I must be about my Father's business," he said.

Maria's next meeting with Jesus was when she sought Him out in His father's carpenter shop where He was making a yoke. He was utterly absorbed in making this yoke, smoothing it, polishing it, as an artist works on a picture.

She approached Him, felt drawn to Him by some strange force. "There was something fascinating about this young Man, something exalted, something that lifted her to great heights. She could not withstand His pull upon her. She felt as if it were a pull upward. She did not care to resist it. It was too invigorating."

She approached Him quietly and He saw her and said: "Peace be with you, my little one!"

"Peace, peace," she began and stopped breathless: "You are making a yoke?"

"Yes, and I like my yoke to be easy."

After a while the talk began again and Jesus questioned her about her home, her family, her hopes, her life, and when she told Him her name He spoke with words like music.

"Yes, I know. Mary of Bethany. Mary is my mother's name, too. 'Tis very beautiful."

THEN THERE WAS CHRIST AND STEPHANUS

When Stephanus first knew Jesus He came as a comforter to him.

The great renunciation had been made. Stephanus had given up Salome. His heart was broken. His spirit was crushed. Then suddenly, there was an arm about him. It must be Shaoul. Or maybe it was his mother. He felt a hand on his shoulder. It was soft like a

mother's hand. He felt that arm steal about his neck. It was sweet. . . .

"Heavens above, it was the Carpenter!"

"Stephanus felt rather than saw the head above him bend in pity, as if the Carpenter knew his grief."

Said Jesus: "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid. Love will come into your life; a different love, but believe me, a greater love. And the Father will pity the Princess Salome, even as a father always pities his children."

These words came to Stephanus like music from far away and up great heights. They brought back a sense of well being like he had when he lay on his mother's breast as a little, hurt child. It was as if he were leaning against a great *Tree*.

THEN THERE WAS MARY MAGDALENE

One day a rich trader came to see Lazarus and wanted him to go out that night for a debauch. But Lazarus had come to know Jesus and did not go on debauches any more. Then the trader thought he would tempt him, and told him that he would bring Maria the Incomparable, Maria of the sun-gold hair, Maria of the perfect figure and the silken skin. . . .

"You mean?"

"Whom could I mean? There's only one Maria of Magdala."

"The Magdalene Maria is a changed woman, my friend. She is not any longer what she was; what you think she still is."

"How changed? Has she lost her beauty?"

"No; added to it."

"How?"

"By transformation, reformation, redemption."

"Changed by whom? Married? Sick? By the immortal gods, how and by whom changed?"

"The Nazarene has changed her!"

"And that's what's the matter with you too, Lazarus?"

"I have cast my lot in with the Nazarene," said Eleazar quietly.

THEN THERE WAS SHAOUL AND JESUS

Shaoul who later was Paul, loved little Maria, but he had drifted away from Jesus. He thought that this Jesus was to bring in an earthly kingdom, and when he discovered that it was not to overthrow Rome that Jesus had come, he drifted away from instead of toward Jesus. Besides, Shaoul came to be a great intellect, and he felt that belief in this Nazarene would violate his intellectual integrity; that Jesus was just an ignorant, uncouth carpenter. He had never gone to the schools. Surely such a man could never be the Messiah.

But Shaoul still loved Maria. And Maria loved Jesus more every day. Jesus came to be a frequenter of this home in Bethany. When He was weary, he found rest there; hungry, He found food there; wounded, He found balm for His soul there; lonely, He found not only the friendly love of a comrade, Lazarus, but also the comforting touch of a woman's hand—Maria's.

Shaoul came there also because he loved Maria, but he had for Jesus only a great contempt. Maria tried to

win him to Jesus. Finally, Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead, and she was telling Shaoul about it, but he still doubted.

"Pardon me, dear maid, you are under some hallucination. If He had done this thing, there is naught I have that would be too precious for Him—not even you—not even you!"

Maria: "Bless you, Shaoul, I knew you would understand."

Shaoul: "But listen, child. *He . . . did . . . not . . . do . . . it!* Such a thing would turn the world upside down. It would set back the circle of time."

Maria: "Aye, 'tis as the Master says, 'Ye would not believe, though one rose from the dead.' He gave us back Lazarus, Shaoul."

Shaoul: "God, what a fascination He must have! And therefore how dangerous, how damnably dangerous He is!"

Shaoul was right—this man Jesus was damnably dangerous to human peace. No man or woman could feel His touch and ever be the same. He upset men and nations. He rallied a group of followers of whom it was later said: "These are come hither who have turned the world upside down."

Shaoul soon found out that this Christ was damnably dangerous to his peace of mind and soul; not only because Maria loved Jesus, but because Shaoul himself was beginning to feel a touch of that strange restlessness which comes upon a human soul when he has had contact of any kind with Jesus. This unrest in his soul kept getting stronger and stronger until,

several weeks after, he saw his dearest friend, Stephanus, stoned to death for this Jesus. Strangely enough, it was Shaoul who sentenced Stephanus to die. Shaoul's heart bled within him:

"O my Stephanus, my brother, my other self . . . O Jonathan . . . Absolom . . . would God I could die for thee . . . O Stephanus!"

Then a large stone crushed in the breast of Stephen and he cried out: "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge!"

This scene haunted Shaoul, and the loyalty of Maria to Jesus; and the memory of his friend dying with a prayer for those who killed him on his lips.

One day, as he was on the road to Damascus—a blinding flash of light—and Shaoul became Paul.

That is what Jesus always does. He changes a man's body and nature; mind and spirit for ever.

THEN THERE WAS GOMAR THE GLADIATOR AND GALATIAN

These three had entered Antioch together that beautiful visioning morning so long ago, at the beginning of this strange story.

All three had been won to the King—Gomar last.

And it was in this manner with Gomar. He was a guard in Pilate's court and legion. He saw the trial of Jesus. Later, he told Stephen about it.

"What did Jesus say, Gomar?" asked Stephen.

"Nothing, my Hercules, nothing. He only stood there and looked them down. There was no priest among them that dared look into His eye. Faugh! He

was the only man in the place. I was tempted myself, to crook the knee to Him!"

Then the author says: "But Gomar never closed his eyes that livelong night upon his bed. A face kept him awake, the face of a '*Man that was a man!*' "

The trials were over. Gomar had watched them. He thought that his master Pilate would save Jesus. But when Pilate did not save Jesus, Gomar denounced him as a "Time-server" to his teeth, fled the court, came to Stephen and cried out:

"I know not who this man Jesus may be. I do not understand. But one thing I know: He is a man, the most wonderful man I ever saw, and I saw Tiberius once. This Nazarene, put Him in harness, is fitter to be emperor than any soldier Gomar ever clapped eyes on. He can have Gomar's arm and sword!"

THEN THERE WAS THE CENTURION AND JESUS

Jesus had been killed. Everybody was filled with foreboding and horror. Killing this strange prophet was different. They had slain their tens of thousands on the wayside crosses, but this killing was different. There were the prophesies. There were His own words that He would rend the temple veil in twain. There were His own words that He would rise again. There was the darkened sky. There was the earthquake which had filled them all with terror. There were His words on the Cross. This was all different. It was haunting. It was foreboding.

The Centurion felt these differences. He had been used to legal killings; crucifixions left him cold. But

when this was over he came to his merchant friend, Lazarus, and cried out his story:

"I sought to relieve His agony . . . aye, and I smote the men that cast dice for His tunic. I gave Him a sponge of wine and poppy juice, on hyssop. But . . . He . . . would not drink. And, oh, He cried, as we raised him: 'Father . . . forgive them . . . they know not . . . what . . . they do!' Who is His father?"

"The Highest," answered Lazarus softly, "is His Father."

"I knew it . . . I knew it . . . I have slain a God!"

Thus we see in this book the story of Vision, the story of Renunciation, and the story of what contact with Christ will do for human souls.

Here was a beautiful, pure girl, Maria, who was Mary. Christ won her devotion and changed her life. Here was the story of a bad woman, Maria Magdalene. He won and changed her life. Here was Stephanus the athlete. He won him and changed his life. There was Shaoul, the intellectual. He won his life and changed him from Saul to Paul. There was Gomar the Galatian Gladiator. He won his allegiance and changed his life. There was the Roman Centurion and soldier. He won his love and changed his life.

And just as Jesus did this thing with these characters of long ago, so has He power to do this day. The Marias, the Magdalenes, the Stephens, the Sauls, the Gomars of our day He summons to His side. They come. We come. "Oh, Lamb of God, we come, we come!"

CHAPTER XIV

"THE WAY OF ALL FLESH"

A DRAMA OF SIN AND ITS INEVITABLE CONSEQUENCES

"The soul that sinneth, it shall die!"—Ezekiel 18:4.
Scripture Reading: The Story of Samson and Delilah.

I want to use a symphonic theme with this drama sermon, and I take it from John Masefield's "The Everlasting Mercy":

"And I felt a drunkenness like wine
And shut out Christ in husks and swine."

That was what August Schilling did in "The Way of all Flesh."

I said, when I first saw this great moral and spiritual drama of life: "This is the first great motion picture which has been produced."

By way of introduction to this drama of life, to prove that the picture itself is not overdrawn, the week I preached this drama sermon, the following article appeared in a Wichita newspaper—a human drama, a perfect replica of "The Way of all Flesh":

"Emil Jannings, with his matchless portrayal of a defaulting banker in "The Way of all Flesh," was swaying an audience at the Palace Theatre as

few Wichita audience have ever been swayed, Wednesday night.

"Tears dimmed the eyes of the majority of those who saw the tragic unfolding of the story of the man who wrecked his life by betraying the trust placed in him.

"Through that whole performance, a little gray-haired woman sat, apparently unmoved, although her heart must have been rended by every foot of the film which flashed before her eyes.

"She was Mrs. J. N. Richardson, whose husband, former president of the American State Bank, is serving a penitentiary sentence for his part in wrecking that institution.

"Friends who came with her when she insisted on seeing the picture, marvelled at the self-control she evidenced.

"Yet even they did not realize the effort it cost her to hold her face unmoved, until a few hours later, after the show, at her home, they found her dead—in all probability of a broken heart, fresh-shattered by the great photoplay she had just witnessed.

"The first part of the picture showed Jannings, an affectionate husband and father, proud of his position as head of the house and fairly beaming at his loved ones. Mrs. Richardson too, had a husband she loved. The scenes showing Jannings in the bank as a respected official there must have moved her also, as she remembered her husband's similar position.

"Then came the development of the plot. The banker was trusted with a fortune, and duped by dishonest acquaintances, was robbed. The actor

ceased being the jovial, semi-comic citizen, and became the bewildered victim of circumstances. His very size, with massive shoulders stooped beneath the sudden weight of trouble, made him more pitiable. His expression, showing the agony of his tortured soul, went straight to the hearts of all who saw—surely to one heart most of all.

“For Mrs. Richardson believed in her husband always. Even after he was convicted she was sure that he had been led by unprincipled friends to his undoing.

“The ruined banker of the picture disappeared, letting his family and friends think him honourably dead rather than alive and disgraced. Not so Richardson, who had not the chance to do likewise, even had he wished it. Did his wife wonder which course was best?

“Ever since the failure of the bank, Mrs. Richardson has had little to say. She helped her husband all she could, and did not desert him when he lost his battle for freedom. Left alone, she bravely held up her head and maintained her position in Wichita, and with success, for her friends never turned from her.

“She was dead when neighbours came to her house, so could say nothing of an experience that must have contributed to her death—the seeing of a shadow story of an actual life tragedy.”

I have investigated this story and find that it is true in every detail. It illustrates the old saying: “Virtue leads to happiness; vice to sorrow!” It is Tito in “Romola” and Arthur Dimmesdale in “The Scarlet Letter” in modern picture drama.

Division One

HOME AND HAPPINESS IN SINCERITY AND SIMPLICITY

The play opens with a German home scene. August Schilling and his little children take part. The children are asleep in their little beds. The ever-punctual, careful, precise, auditor-minded August Schilling wakens them all on the dot. We see him tossing them out of their beds for the morning bath and the morning exercises.

We see this great, awkward father washing each child while the mother prepares the simple breakfast. We see them at the setting-up exercises and at family prayers. We see each child sent off to school. We even see young August get a whipping from his father, and a touch of humour is introduced when the father strikes the table instead of the boy, to make the mother in the next room think that he is giving young August what is coming to him.

We see touches of a simple German family life. They win our hearts. The acting of Emil Jannings is superb, and the settings are simple and natural.

Young August Schilling stays behind while the others go to school, and the father asks him to play the violin for him. He plays "The Cradle Song" and the tender-hearted father weeps. The boy says: "Daddy, why do you always cry when you hear the Cradle Song?"

We do not forget that phrase and that scene. Its very simplicity wins our hearts to August Schilling, and to the boy who plays so artistically and so feelingly.

We have the feeling, as he is pictured here in his home life, that August Schilling is simple, normal, loving and true. He is the type of man who might in his very simplicity and unsophistication be easily betrayed.

Division Two

THE BUSINESS LIFE AND THE PLAY LIFE OF AUGUST SCHILLING

The second part of this picture introduces us to the business life of August Schilling, whom we have just seen in his picturesque and appealing relationship with his children and his home.

We see him leave home in the morning after all of the children have been sent off to school. As he walks briskly to the corner we see the newsboys, the people whom he meets, lift their hats and bow. It is easy to see that August Schilling is a highly respected citizen in his community, and that his place in that community is a secure one. People would as soon think of the Washington Monument falling as for this pillar of good citizenship to fall. He is a part of that common every day good citizenship which is the crux of honour, integrity and stability. His very German make-up, his place in the bank—all indicate that everyone trusts him.

As we see him enter the bank, the very odour of order, punctuality, and precision is evidenced. We know by a few deft strokes and touches that everything here is done every day in the same way. There is a general sense of alertness on the part of every employee when

August Schilling enters the bank; which makes us know that he is a hard task-master, yet a man with a great, kindly heart.

"Business is business" seeps through his every utterance and every gesture. He is what I call "an auditor-minded man."

A boy comes late to work and is called into August Schilling's stern presence. He is terrified. He lies about being late. Schilling finds a hair on his coat and says: "Why do you lie?" It is a kindly but shrewd gesture.

The stamp boy is found guilty of stealing twenty-five cents' worth of stamps from the stamp-box. The severe yet kindly manner in which August Schilling deals with him wins our hearts. Yet we feel here the unchangeable law of the Medes and Persians at work in a man's soul.

There is something granite-like, and yet something forgiving and tender about him. We feel that business, especially the atmosphere of a bank, has put a veneer of granite about a soul which is as tender as we saw him in his dealings with his children in the first scene of this great drama.

There is enough of this bank scene to make us understand the two sides of the man's character, the hard side and the tender side; enough to make us respect and love him.

Then the producers show us August Schilling at play. He is bowling that evening with his friends, his coat off, his sleeves rolled up, and joy on his face as his ball strikes from time to time, a ten shot. He is offered beer, but refuses it with a gesture of friendliness but aloofness. He is above such. He is the

honoured and respected banker and citizen and father. He must not be seen drinking publicly. He keeps the letter of the law in his "auditor-minded" way.

In the midst of his bowling a messenger calls him back to the bank on a special mission. He is to be sent to Chicago to sell some valuable bonds. He is being sent because he is the most respected and trustworthy man in the bank. He is as safe as the Federal Reserve Bank. He can be trusted until Time ends. He has never failed a trust.

Division Three

TRAIN SCENE ON THE WAY TO CHICAGO

There is a girl on the train sitting across from him in the Pullman. She is a woman of the adventuress type. It is apparent to the audience which sees the unfolding of this tragic story; and yet it does not seem apparent to the simple-minded, sincere, inexperienced, unsophisticated August Schilling. We feel sorry for him. We laugh at him but pity him. He is so curious about that girl. She flirts openly with him. He has evidently never had such an experience before. Cloistered in his regularity; cloistered in his immediate duty and joy of raising a large family for so many years; cloistered in his machine-like routine at the bank; cloistered by his very limited group of friends; cloistered in his very reputation as the town's prominent banker and citizen; when he once gets away from his social, business and family bulwarks of protection he is like a simple-minded girl suddenly let out of a convent, without knowledge of the world; and he falls

an immediate and easy victim to this adventuress and her wiles.

We see her lure him to the dining-car and nonchalantly order everything on the bill of fare. We see his agony as the bill mounts. It is to laugh and it is to weep as we watch. It is comedy and it is tragedy; but it is also life which we are watching with wistful eyes.

We see her lure him to a cheap hotel. We see him go so far, at her behest, as to have his great shaggy head of hair cut so that he looks, after the hair-cutting episode, like a shorn Samson before his Delilah.

Somehow this symbolic change in his physical appearance is an outward expression of a change in his character and his soul. It was so in the old Biblical story of Samson. When August Schilling listened to the lure of her demand that he get his hair cut so that he would look like a young man, he was shorn of the strength of his reputation, of his standing in the community, of the social laws and a lifetime of regularity which he had built up in his soul.

Most of us do not know how much protection we actually get from our reputations, from our standing in our communities. We are actually protected by what people expect of us; by what we have led them to hope for from us. We are protected from barbarism because we are family men, because we are church members, because we are fathers, and bankers, and preachers, and teachers, and because people have what Dickens called "Great Expectations" of us.

But the minute that August Schilling allowed that barber to cut his hair he was no longer the same man.

He did not look like the same man. His dignity was gone. His very carriage was gone. His respectability, his old self, was gone. He was shorn of what he had been.

This is a great tragedy which is cleverly symbolized as we watch it in the commonplace barber-shop of a great American city. It happens in life every day. But it is seldom so cleverly symbolized for us.

Something happened to the soul of August Schilling when he got his hair cut at the behest of this modern Delilah. She wanted him, so she said, to look like a young man.

Then came the "cold grey dawn of the morning after." I remember a song from an old musical comedy which I used to whistle as a boy:

"There is no time for mirth and laughter
In the cold, grey dawn of the morning after."

That couplet echoes and re-echoes through my mind as I watch this play. I also hear the words of John Masefield's lines:

"And felt a drunkenness like wine
And shut out Christ in husks and swine."

When August Schilling awoke on that "cold, grey dawn of the morning after" and found himself betrayed; his bonds stolen; his clothes gone; his integrity besmirched; shorn of his decency, his manhood, his honour, his all; half-drunken still, poisoned and doped, he stumbled toward the mirror, cracked and broken, but sufficiently clear so that he caught a glimpse of his face in its tell-tale depths.

For the first time August Schilling sees himself for

what he is. What a tremendous and a tragic moment that is! Emil Jannings does it full justice. He is Shakespearean in his acting. He is the soul of a broken, betrayed, tragedy-stricken human being. He sees several things in that look into the mirror. He betrays it all in his face.

He sees the symbol of that change of soul which was revealed when he permitted himself to be shorn of his locks. For the first time he sees what a change the barber has made in his looks. He sees something in his own eyes which tells him that his soul has fallen from its high estate into the slime of life's morass. He sees defeat to his soul and body! There is a look of almost inexpressible agony on that face as August Schilling looks into that cracked, cheap rooming-house mirror.

He looks further than into that cracked mirror; he looks into his own soul. He looks even further than that; he looks into his own future.

He is experiencing the same thing that the young lawyer in Tolstoi's "The Resurrection" experienced when he sat in the jury box and saw Maslova who was formerly Katusha, whom he had betrayed as a girl; Maslova the harlot, who has murdered a rich merchantman in her rooms; Maslova with the drawn features, the hard, cruel mouth; the bitter, cynical smile; the girl who was, until she was betrayed by the young lawyer, Katusha the innocent. As the young lawyer looks at her face he sees what sin and the years in between have done to that girl's soul. But worse than that—through the mirror of her face, he sees what has happened to his own soul also.

August Schilling rushes from that evil room and runs downstairs to the clerk of this cheap hotel; tells him his trouble; of the missing bonds; and is laughed at. The clerk is cold, indifferent, brazen in his pitilessness. He rushes out to the dance-hall where the night before he had danced with his modern Delilah, and in the stagnant atmosphere of that dance-hall he smells the refuse of moral filth, the stink of spiritual offal, the vile stench of human beasts and brutalities.

He is pitifully fearful about his money. He doesn't yet understand human treachery. He cannot grasp it all. He believes that it must be some mistake. He is telling his story to one of the "bouncers," when his Delilah appears, clad in rich ermine furs, and approaches him with brazen, coddling familiarity, yet with fangs ready to strike if he attempts to make trouble.

He begs her for his money. She laughs in his face. He cries out: "You do not understand. It means arrest, disgrace for my wife and children!"

Then his Delilah gets tired of the whole thing and gives a signal to the "bouncer," assuming indignation because August Schilling has accused her, an innocent girl, of robbery! The bouncers do their work well, and suddenly the old man drops to the floor unconscious under a terrific blow on the head from a chair.

Tied to a railroad track to die, he escapes; becomes himself a murderer in freeing himself from his assailants, pushing one of them under the approaching train, then wandering like a half-drunken man back toward the far lights of the city.

As he wanders about, suddenly on the skyline of

the city, he sees the names of certain plays flashed from time to time against the sky in electric letters. He looks again, and the first word that flashes out across the sky is the word: "T-H-I-E-F!" A block or two away another word flashes out: "A-D-U-L-T-E-R-E-R!"

These white lights flash their accusation into his defeated and cringing soul like branding-irons, searing and hissing. He slinks away.

But as he looks up again, across the sky flashes the single word: "M-U-R-D-E-R-E-R!"

When a man has sinned, the whole world rises to accuse him.

"Oh, God, if there had been no memories!" cries the character in "The Power of a Lie," by Bojer.

At every turn of life, the man who sins finds his sin confronting him.

"Thief! Adulterer! Murderer!" is the cry of the whole world. No man ever gets away from his sins. "Be sure your sin will find you out!" is no idle saying in the Book of Books. "That which I feared hath come upon me!" is no feeble utterance.

Tito's sin haunted him until it finally throttled him on the banks of the Arno under the bony clutch of an old man's fingers at his throat. Dimmesdale's sin in "The Scarlet Letter" lived with him day and night, and finally burned a cruel "A" into the flesh of his breast and his soul.

You cannot get away from sin. It will haunt day and night; even unto death.

Then came the decision to suicide. But as he was leaning over the dock he saw the headlines of a torn newspaper. A man's body had been found. It was

thought to be that of August Schilling, crushed beyond recognition by a train.

The story of his death offered a way out. He was dead so far as his bank and his family were concerned. He had died as a hero, in fact. Let it go at that.

Division Four

THE INEVITABLE CONCLUSION OF THIS TYPE OF A LIFE

Years have passed and we see August Schilling peddling hot chestnuts. He is an old man with grey beard, unkempt, poor, penniless, weak and lonely. We see him watching the little children in the park, lonely for his own children. We see him one cold winter night, while the snow is blowing in his face, look up once again at the theatre lights as he had looked up on that memorable night when "Thief! Adulterer! Murderer!" accused him. And this night he sees the name: AUGUST SCHILLING! VIOLINIST! flaming from the front of the theatre in blazing electric lights.

He gets into the gallery and listens to his own son play the violin.

There is great acting here. The old man in the gallery hears his own son playing to that vast throng. For an encore the boy says: "For an encore I will play an old Cradle Song my father taught me!"

Then the famous violinist plays the old German Cradle Song which August Schilling, his father, used to weep over when that lad was a little boy, and the boy used to say: "Daddy, why do you always cry when I play that Cradle Song?"

The old man stumbles out of the theatre, goes to

the stage entrance, sees his own son pass out into a waiting automobile, hears the stage door-keeper say: "He's a good boy—he's going home to spend Christmas with his mother!"

August Schilling finds his way back also to that home, looks in through the window from a back alley and watches his own family at their Christmas preparations.

From a box in the alley, with the snow falling about his old, shivering form, he watches his own children unwrap their Christmas presents, watches them eat their Christmas dinner, follows them to church and sees them go into the cemetery and lay a wreath of flowers on the graves of two of his sons who had been killed in France; sees his own wife weeping over a stone erected to his memory.

He goes back to his home and looks in through the windows again. A policeman sees him and grabs him by the shoulder. There is a scuffle, a shrill whistle, and his own violinist son comes to the door, sees what is happening, and begs the officer to release this old man, whom he does not recognize as his own father.

But before the old man goes away into the night, the son says: "Have you a home?"

And August Schilling replies: "Yes, I have a wonderful home, and I am very happy!"

Then out into the snowy night, staggering through the streets into oblivion, goes August Schilling, the sinner, the outcast!

When I watched this great human tragedy dramatized on the screen, I heard a woman behind me cry out: "Oh, why didn't they make it with a happy end-

ing?" And I felt like turning to that woman and saying: "Woman, sin never leaves a happy ending! That isn't sin's way with men."

"Oh, God, if there had been no memories!"

"The soul that sins, that soul shall die!"

And yet there is something that this scenario writer does not seem to know:

That there is a God in Israel; and that there was a Christ who died on Calvary's cross for penitent sinners; and that while men may not forgive, and the law may claim its full pound of flesh like Shylock of old; still God does forgive. Witness Saul Kane, and the Prodigal Son, who "remembered that he had a Father."

CHAPTER XV

"SEVENTH HEAVEN"

A MESSAGE OF HIGH AND HOLY HOPE

"For we have seen His star."—Matthew 2:2.

There have been several great biblical motion pictures.

"The Ten Commandments," "Ben Hur," "The King of Kings," are all great spectacular masterpieces of biblical interpretation, although there has been a good deal of public controversy over the latter. Nevertheless, these three constitute the great trio of biblical motion pictures.

In another group of pictures we have such films as "The Way of All Flesh," "Les Miserables," "The Scarlet Letter," "The Resurrection," and "Seventh Heaven,"—all of these great sermons thrust into the hearts of men through the medium of the screen.

In this drama sermon I deal with "Seventh Heaven."

The Wise Men saw the Star of Bethlehem because they looked up.

Chico, working down in the sewers of Paris in this great picture, saw the stars because he looked up.

In this respect, Chico and the Three Wise Men were akin.

You have to look up to see stars, then, and now, and for ever! He is a Wise Man who looks up, for in so doing, he will always see the stars of life.

There are four levels in this great picture: The level of the sewers of Paris; the level of the streets of Paris; the level of the "Seventh Heaven," which was the tenement at the top of seven flights of winding stairs where Chico lived; and the level of the stars.

Division One

THE LEVEL OF THE SEWERS OF LIFE

The drama starts in the sewers of Paris. Chico and "The Rat" are toiling away in the murk and the muck of the sewers below the streets of Paris, those sewers made famous in Victor Hugo's "Les Miserables" when Jean val Jean made his way, battling for light, life, and liberty outside the walls of Paris.

Here too, another Jean val Jean, Chico, fights his battles, with his eyes on the stars. Even though he toils in the sewers, his goal is toward the stars.

As Chico and The Rat with their great poles, push along the debris of the Paris sewers, Chico talks to The Rat about his life's ambition.

His ambition is to be a street-sweeper, where he can hold the nozzle of a hose and wash the cobbled streets above the sewers. But even though this is his ambition, he has even a higher ambition than that; and that ambition is to live with the stars. Even while he works in the sewers he does that. Each day, after his work in the sewers is done, we see him trudge home, climb seven flights of stairs to his lowly rooms at the top of the tenement, up near the stars.

One day Chico, with his hair flung back from his forehead, turns to The Rat and speaks immortal words,

hurtling into the hearts of men from any man's pulpit:

"I work in the sewers, but I live near the stars!"

Heartening and hilarious challenge that is, to every man and woman who feels that his work is wearisome, that his tasks are menial, that his labour is lowly. Heartening word that, to all the mothers of the earth who have to wash dishes, sew little baby stockings, wash baby bodies, and get little children ready for school.

And most of us have to do this. Most of us have to work on the earth and with earthly things. Most of us have to go down into the marts of trade, behind the counters, in the stuffy offices, down into the subways of life. Most of us are commuters and have to walk with the throng; have to be a part of the moiling, toiling mobs of life.

Life's everyday tasks have to be done down close to the earth. But thank God that we, like Chico, if we be Wise Men of today, may remember that his motto is a workable one:

"I work in the sewers but I live near the stars!"

Even labour is lifted close to the stars with that philosophy of life. If those of us who have to labour at uncongenial tasks can have at the end of the day, books, pleasure, loved ones, and homes to go to, we can endure the day's toil, if such is our slogan.

Life is like that. Most of us have to work in the sewers, but thank God that we can live near the stars of imagination, the stars of dream, of vision, of music and poetry, of love and laughter, of home and hope eternal.

Another striking sentence which Chico speaks to

The Rat as they toil away down in the dark sewers of Paris, is one which rings out like a trumpet blast:

"For those who will climb it, there is a ladder which leads from the depths to the heights; from the sewer to the stars!"

Ah, Chico! There's the rub: "For those who will climb it!"

It leads from the depths to the heights, from the sewers to the stars, for those who will climb it.

And you climbed it, boy! You Playboy! You Stargazer! You Dreamer! You Valiant Soul! You Jean val Jean! You climbed it!

You were one of our modern Wise Men who saw the star in the East and came to worship.

Another day The Rat and Chico were toiling away in the sewers when a deluge of dirty street water came down through the manhole above and flung The Rat in to the sewer. Chico fished him out, and then said to him as he laughed aloud at the Rat's discomfort:

"Never look down! Always look up! I never look down! I always look up! That's why I am a very remarkable fellow!"

Buoyant, optimistic, self-reliant, self-confident Chico, what a tonic he is to us! That very human universal phrase which he uses from time to time wins our hearts: "That's why I am a very remarkable fellow!" We leap to that self-confidence. We laugh with him. We are won to him. "That's why I am a very remarkable fellow" finds a fellow-feeling in most male hearts. Most wives and sweethearts are able to smile over that male characteristic in Chico. "That's why I'm a very remarkable fellow!"

That characteristic of Chico, and that characteristic in any man's mental makeup is a mine of gold, a diamond, a treasure vault of unimaginable riches. Never try to crush that instinct in a child! Never take it out of Youth! That is what makes man immortal—his belief that he is a very remarkable fellow.

The first thing the average wife tries to do when she finds herself married to a man who believes in himself, is to crush that feeling he has, that he is a very remarkable fellow, out of him; when what she ought to do is to get down on her knees and thank God that she has a husband who has that eternal gift of self-confidence. It is like an engine going on full steam. It is like a great, powerful boiler blowing off at the safety-valve. It is one of the great God's good gifts to humankind, that belief expressed in Chico's sentence: "That's why I am a very remarkable fellow!"

Did not God Himself say that He had made man in His own image, just a little lower than the angels; and that He had crowned him with life eternal? Does not that make man "Almost omnipotent?" Has he not a right to believe that he is a very remarkable fellow?

This is a gift of the gods in a child, or in Youth, or in a husband. Do not despise it! Cherish it! Let it live! It is that something within a human soul which will lift that soul, and all who depend upon his genius, from mediocrity to miracle, from the depths to the heights, from the sewers to the stars of life.

That is a true and a good Christian philosophy of life.

Division Two

CHICO ATTAINED THE STREET LEVEL OF LIFE

What might be called the second part of this strange picture begins in a dirty hovel of a room where live two girls. One is Diane, young, beautiful and sweet. Her older sister is a drunken brute, always beating Diane with a great whip, driving her to the streets for more liquor. Diane's life is bestial and brutalized. We pity her and our hearts are won to her when we see her beaten by her sister in a drunken rage.

A wealthy uncle and aunt from South America come to visit the two girls, and find them in this hovel of a room. The uncle suspects that they have not been pure. He questions the older sister and she lies.

He questions Diane and she tells the truth, admits that they have not been good girls, but that they have sold their bodies and their souls through poverty.

The uncle throws down a little money and departs with an air of Puritan self-righteousness, leaving them to their fate. The older sister is raging with anger, and starts to beat Diane, driving her into the street.

As she runs down the street, pursued by the drunken hate of her older sister, she falls to the cobblestones in front of the curb just at the spot where Chico, The Rat, and their friend, the cab-driver, are having a meager lunch.

Chico is disgusted. He hates women. He is absorbed with his ambition to be a street-washer. But he has to pay some attention to an unconscious girl who falls at his feet. He picks her up, gives her a share of his

meagre lunch, and talks to her. He sees something in her.

Chico says to Diane: "Well, if you don't like what you are, you are not bad!"

What a Christian observation that is! Isn't that precisely what Jesus said to the woman taken in adultery? "Well, if you don't like what you are, you're not bad!" It is when you come to like wickedness that wickedness sears your soul.

One day in a revival meeting a man came up to Sinclair Lewis and said, not knowing who he was: "Don't you want to give up your sins?"

"Hell, no!" said Lewis, "I love my sins!"

That was the most surprising answer that that fundamentalist revivalist ever received. It shocked him so that he moved on. We all laughed. Lewis meant it.

That is the difference between the man or the woman who is driven by social circumstances, or economic pressure, into sin. If he likes his or her sins, he is a sinner; if he does not, he is not a sinner in the eyes of the ever good and kindly God. Chico was right in his Christian philosophy: "Well, if you don't like what you are, you're not bad!"

Then they got to talking about God among themselves. Chico doesn't think much of God.

Why?

First, because he asked God to take him out of the sewer and make him a street-washer. Thus he spoke to the Catholic Father who was always after the soul of Chico. As they sit on the curb, suddenly the Catholic Father slips into Chico's hand his commission

as a street-washer. Chico believes a little more in this God then.

Second, he doesn't think much of God because he has always prayed to God to send him "a wife with yellow hair."

He tells poor Diane this: "I asked God for a wife with yellow hair and look what he's sent me!"

Third: he doesn't believe in God because God has let such injustices happen as Diane's condition.

"Did God make this girl to be beaten and starved? Did he make me, who love the light, to live in a sewer in the darkness?"

His friend The Rat replies: "Well everybody makes mistakes sometimes."

But nevertheless Chico's challenges to God are worthy. They are universal. We see the injustices of life, we see its poverty, we see its hate and hurt, and we often wonder if a good God and an intelligent God is running the Universe. Chico's questions occur to all of us; and Chico's questions sooner or later get answered—just as his did—if we let time and God have their way, and if we have the same type of a philosophy that Chico had.

Division Three

THE "SEVENTH HEAVEN" LEVEL OF LIFE

The third scene in this strangely human drama is enacted up in Chico's humble rooms at the top of the seven flights of stairs.

Down on the street level where we have just seen Chico, The Rat, the Taxicab Driver, the Priest, and

Diane, talking and eating and living, we see a mob approaching. A policeman is dragging Diane's older sister to jail because she is a woman of the streets. They come to where Diane sits talking with Chico. The older sister tells the officer that Diane is a bad woman also and ought to be arrested.

Chico tells the officer that Diane is not a bad girl, but that she is his wife. Then he is placed in the embarrassing position of having to take her to his rooms and pretend that she is his wife. He grudgingly does so.

They climb the seven flights of stairs to Chico's rooms. As they enter, Diane, who has never seen even this much comfort, cries out:

"Oh, Chico! It's Heaven! It's Heaven!"

Then Chico takes her out on the roof and shows her the stars which he can see from the roof of the tall tenement.

"It's Heaven, Chico! It's Heaven!"

Says Chico in return: "Here I could touch the stars, Diane!"

Down on the street level Chico had told the policeman that Diane was his wife to save her from arrest. The gendarme said he would come later to confirm Chico's statement.

It is a simple, beautiful, wholesome drama enacted there in Chico's humble quarters, when Chico gives Diane his bed and goes out to sleep on the fire escape, wrapped in a blanket. Neighbours next door take care of Diane, and she becomes beautiful under kindly treatment. She loves Chico, for he is the first human being who has ever been kind to her. Chico in turn loves

Diane because she is beautiful and because she needs him.

One day Chico says to her: "At last I believe in the good God. I believe He brought you to me!"

The war comes; the call to service; they must be married at once, for Chico loves Diane. There is no money for a priest.

Chico has two Catholic medals which the old priest has given him. They are simple things, such as I have gathered up at Lourdes and Calvaire, and at many a Catholic shrine in France, and keep on my desk, but they mean much to Chico and Diane.

With the neighbours gathered in for the wedding, Diane appears in a beautiful gown which she herself has made. Chico is astonished at her handiwork, and under the glow of his pleasure and approval, Diane, with a beautiful touch of humour, uses his own pet phrase, much to his amusement, saying: "Chico, I, too, am a very remarkable fellow!"

They stand up to be married. Chico said: "I Chico, take you, Diane, to be my wife, for ever!"

Diane says after him: "I Diane, take you, Chico, to be my husband for ever!"

They seal these sacred vows with the two simple little medals from the Catholic shrines.

It is done, and then Diane, lost in his love and in his arms, says: "I'm not used to being happy! It's funny! It makes me laugh! I want to cry!"

Then Chico responds: "Good God, if there is any truth in the idea of you, make us man and wife for ever!"

What a holy thing it is, this simple wedding cere-

mony, without benefit of church or state. What a ring that word "for ever" has in it as they use it! No "companionate marriage" here. Companionate marriage is not giving the sacred institution of marriage a chance. Companionate marriage is marriage with the fingers crossed. Companionate marriage is marriage with a loop-hole; with no expectations of its taking. Chico and Diane married each other "for ever!"

Then came Chico's departure for the war. It is a beautiful and a sacred hour. They pledge each other that at high noon each day they shall think of each other.

They part. As they stand together, they pledge themselves in this phrase: "Chico! Diane! Heaven!"

As Chico goes out he looks back at Diane and says: "My eyes are filled with you!"

We remember this phrase in the next scene, which is No Man's Land. Chico is wounded. His eyes are blinded. He thinks he is dying. He tells the priest about Diane and says: "Tell her I died looking up!"

What a thundering phrase it is: "Tell her I died looking up!" That has been one of their favourite love and life phrases since the day he took her from the street level of life up to his "Seventh Heaven."

"Tell her I died looking up!"

She would understand that. Lovers have a code signal. This, Diane would understand.

"Tell her I died looking up!"

That was the philosophy of Chico's life from the beginning, from the days when he worked in the sewers and said: "I work in the sewers, but I live in the stars."

That philosophy lifted him from the sewer level of life to the street level, and then to the level of the "Seventh Heaven" and finally to the level of the stars themselves!

"Tell her I died looking up!"

That was the life slogan of the boy who said long ago to The Rat: "For those who will climb it, there is a ladder which leads from the depths to the heights; from the sewers to the stars." That was the drive of a boy who said to The Rat down in the murky sewers of Paris; "Never look down! Always look up! I never look down! I always look up! That's why I am a very remarkable fellow!"

"Tell her I died looking up!"

But he did not die. Diane thinks he is dead. The Government report says that Chico died. The Church brings Diane the message of Chico's death through the Priest who ministered to him. But Diane will not believe that her Chico is dead. He has never failed that rendezvous with her.

The Armistice has come. The French soldiers are returning home, but no Chico comes with the rest. Diane still believes her Chico alive. She says to her friends:

"It isn't true that Chico is dead! It isn't true! Chico is alive! I know he is!"

But the evidence that he is dead becomes overwhelming. Then in defiance and despair she cried out:

"For four years I believed in God! I thought He would bring Chico back to me, and now he's dead!"

Like Chico did of old, she disowns a God who would

give her all of that happiness and then snatch it from her. She has to prove God as Chico did of old. And God stands the test of both of them. Chico demanded certain definite things of God, and God met every test of Chico's, in a human, natural way. Chico was won to God because God, through the priest, got him a job as a street-washer. God met his test by sending him Diane, and we still remember Chico's words of appreciation:

"I believe in the good God! I believe He brought you to me!"

Now Diane is testing God. If God does not bring Chico back, she cannot believe!

Then suddenly we see blind Chico feeling his way along the streets of Paris through the hilarious Armistice Day crowds on parade. He will not stop to be led back to the old rendezvous in the "Seventh Heaven." He finds his way alone. We see him on the streets, we see him at the foot of the seven flights of winding stairs, we see him enter the room, we see him in the arms of Diane once again; we see Diane look at his blinded eyes; we see a look of dismay in her face; and then we hear the victorious, triumphant cry of Chico:

"Diane, now that I'm blind, I see that God is real!"

Holy of holies, what an undercurrent of living, vibrant faith and philosophy runs through that sentence:

"Diane, now that I'm blind, I see that God is real!"

No wonder Helen Keller, when Phillips Brooks was trying to describe God for the first time to her, started to smile, and then to laugh. Phillips Brooks said to Helen: "Why are you laughing?"

Helen replied: "I knew all the time who God was, but I didn't know His name!"

"Diane, now that I'm blind, I see that God is real!"

It took blindness to make Chico see with his immortal eyes, with his invisible spiritual eyes, see through the material to the Eternal.

"For we have seen His star," said the Wise Men of old.

Chico said: "Diane, now that I'm blind, I see that God is real!"

The world of material, earthly things shut out, and then Chico could see the spiritual, the eternal, the immortal, the everlasting!

And at last Chico and Diane were in the "Seventh Heaven." They had taken up their journey to the stars!

They had climbed from the Sewer Levels of Life to the Street Levels, to the Star Levels, to the Spiritual Levels; and they were still climbing when we left them, climbing to God.

"For those who will climb it, there is a ladder which leads from the depths to the heights!"

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York, Doubleday, Doran and Co., 1928.
xii, 254 p. 19 cm.

1. Religion in literature.
2. Fiction--Moral and religious aspects.
3. Drama--History and criticism.
- I. Title

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